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A-League Round 20 Friday 10th Feb - Sunday 12th Feb 2012

This Week's Line Up



LAVICKA TO LEAVE SFC
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RACE FOR FINALS HEATS UP



PHOTO: BEN NEVILLE

SKY'S THE LIMIT!



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Sydney FC and Lavicka to part ways after 2011-12 season

Sydney FC and coach Vitezslav Lavicka have mutually agreed that his contract as Sydney FC Head Coach will not be extended beyond the end of the 2011/12 Hyundai A-League season.

The decision was reached at a meeting between Lavicka and Sydney FC CEO Dirk Melton earlier this week, which was part of the timetable for Sydney FC and Lavicka to determine the best way forward for all parties with the Czech Republic coach's contract due to expire at the end of this season.

Leading into the meeting, the Sydney FC Board met on 25 January and Lavicka was respectfully given time to contemplate whether he wanted to continue with the Sky Blues while apart from his wife and two daughters, who have been living in Prague for the past 12 months.

At the meeting both Sydney FC and Lavicka agreed now was the right time to change direction.

"The Sydney FC Board has decided not to renew the contract of Vitezslav Lavicka beyond the 2011/12 Hyundai A-League season," said Sydney FC CEO Dirk Melton. "At the same time, Vitezslav decided he wants to return home to be with his family and continue his career in Europe."

Lavicka joined Sydney FC at the beginning of the 2009/10 season, securing the Premiership and claiming a Grand Final



Vitezslav Lavicka will bow out of the A-League after this season.

victory in his first season in charge of the Sky Blues.

"I have enjoyed my time at Sydney FC and I want to continue to do my best and work hard with the players and staff at Sydney FC to be as successful as possible this season," Lavicka said. "But for next year I am living too far away from my family and they are very important."

"Since I came to Sydney I have been lucky to meet many good people, work

with professional people - staff and players - and we managed to achieve great success in the first year. I will always have good memories of my time in Sydney, especially the Sydney FC Members and fans."

As a gesture to honour the contribution Lavicka has made to Sydney FC, both through the 2009/10 Premiership - Championship double and by the way he has carried himself, the annual Syd-

ney FC Clubman of the Year Award will be named in his honour

"Vitezslav as a man is beyond reproach," Melton said. "He is driven by values that make him a tremendous role model. He has incredible integrity, humility and honour and his warm smile, welcoming handshake and positive outlook have set a standard for everyone at the Club."

"History will look favourably on his contribution to the Football Club as the man who delivered our first double but it is also fitting that he should become part of Sydney FC history and heritage through the Clubman of the Year Award. "We would like to wish Vitezslav and his family the best of luck for the future."

PUNTERS BACK ARNIE FOR SYDNEY FC

Punters with leading online book-maker sportsbet.com.au have backed Graham Arnold from a distant \$13 shot into clear favourite at \$2.75 to take the reins of Sydney FC in the A-League next season.

85% of bets placed on the market have been for Arnold to move to the Sky Blues while every other contender originally priced have either drifted in betting or remained the same.

Early favourite Gianfranco Zola has drifted from \$5.00 out to \$5.50 as has Branko Culina (\$8.00 out to \$13), Steve Corica (\$9.00 out to \$13), Ian Crook (\$11 out to \$15) and Tony Popovic (\$15 out to \$19).

"In the punters eyes Graham Arnold will be at Sydney FC next season," sportsbet.com.au's Ben Hawes said. "There's been little to no interest in anyone else."

Victory inks new deals

Melbourne Victory announces that defender, Ubay Luzardo, has joined the club, on-loan, until the end of the Hyundai A-League season, subject to an International Transfer Certificate (ITC).

Luzardo has spent the past two-and-a-half years playing in the Hong Kong First Division with Kitchee SC, making 44 appearances and scoring 10 goals. Alongside fellow new recruit, Mark Milligan, the Spaniard will provide greater depth to a defence that has conceded 30 goals this campaign.

The 28 year-old has been on trial at AAMI Park for the past two weeks and interim Head Coach, Jim Magilton, has been impressed by what he's seen, "Ubay is a big, strong boy, who moves well for a player of his size."

"He's done everything right in his short time with the club and will provide more stability to our defence and also give us some flexibility with the personnel we currently have," Magilton added.

In further good news, Captain, Adrian Leijer, has signed a 2-year contract

extension that will take him through until the end of the 2013/14 Hyundai A-League season while promising youngsters Matthew Foschini and Petar Franjic have also put pen to paper on new deals. Along with Leijer, Foschini has signed for an additional two years, while Franjic extended his term by one year.

All three represent the future of Melbourne Victory and Magilton is delighted to have secured players of their calibre, "These three boys have all represented Australia in different age groups and it was important that we kept them at our club."

"Adrian has proven himself to be one of the most reliable defenders in the league and, at just 25, is still relatively young for a centre-half and will only continue to improve," he said.

"Matthew has established himself as a first team regular this season and Petar has done very well when given an opportunity, so I believe both youngsters have bright futures at this club."

Striker Sutton raring to go

New Central Coast Mariners striker John Sutton has arrived.

The on-loan Heart of Midlothian marksman linked with his new teammates for the first time on Wednesday morning at Pluim Park, Lisarow, having only arrived in the country late on Tuesday evening.

Chauffured by the club back to his temporary residence in Terrigal after a long flight from Glasgow via Dubai, Sutton today addressed the media following a light run with Graham Arnold's team.

Indeed, Sutton told the interested gallery that his families' first impression of the Central Coast region was a positive one.

"It's a beautiful area, I think that was our first impression," Sutton said. "Coming into the club this morning there's certainly a lot of good players here and it's a very well run club, so (I am) just looking forward to getting started here properly."

Sutton had a light jog on the Pluim Park surface and will not be available for Friday night's important clash against Melbourne Victory at AAMI Park, however Mariners' boss Graham Arnold said the striker had already impressed him with his professional attitude.

"As soon as he got in last night I met him at 1am at the Crowne Plaza to welcome him and he was already talking about training today and wanting to get on the field as quickly as possible, and that's a great attitude for a coach to see," Arnold said.

At ease with the media, Sutton spoke of his personal desire to contribute strongly to the club throughout his initial four-month stay, and become a cog in



John Sutton arrives at MARiners from Scotland.

Photo: JOHN DEWBERRY

the Mariners' unit.

"I got the phone call from Central Coast and I spoke to the manager here, Graham (Arnold), and it didn't take long for him to persuade us to come down," Sutton said. "There's obviously a lot to look forward to with the playoffs and the Champions League - he was very enthusiastic and it didn't take long for him to persuade us to come over."

"All I am going to do is try and keep going with what they boys have done already, they're top of the league and have done really well. Hopefully I can be part of something special that goes on and does well in the playoffs and the Champions League."

"The focus is on trying to win some-

thing here."

While Graham Arnold described Sutton as "a striker that plays with his back to goal" and elaborated about his strength in the penalty box, Sutton said he would prefer to let his performances on the pitch inform fans as to what type of player he is.

"I'd rather get on the pitch and let them (the fans) decide for themselves but hopefully I am just going to be a cog in the unit that's very successful which they have been so far," he said.

"Certainly there is a lot of big games between now and the end of the season ... hopefully I'll be in next weekend for the home game against Wellington."

Short Passes

JETS RELEASE PAYNE
The Newcastle Jets and striker Chris Payne have mutually agreed to terminate his existing contract with the Club, effective immediately.

Since being at the Club, Payne has been unable to secure a position in the Hyundai A-League team and has decided to pursue opportunities elsewhere.

"We wish Chris all the best in his future career and will continue to assist him to find another Club," CEO Robbie Middleby said.

Payne is confident of continuing his career at another club.

"I am disappointed that due to a change in circumstances at Newcastle that my time at the Club has been cut short and has not worked out the way that I planned," Payne said.

"I want to wish the rest of the boys in the squad all the best, and I will now look to further my career at a new club and achieve my goals as I have a lot of ambition and can hopefully fulfil it with a new team."

WATERSON RETURNS TO GEORGIES

Another of the prodigal sons has returned home to Sunshine George Cross with the signing of Trent Waterson after one season at South Melbourne.

Trent was last at S.G.C. in 2010, but only made a very brief appearances in the opening five games of the season, before succumbing to a serious groin injury. His transfer to Premier League club South Melbourne saw Waterson take part in most matches, but a change of coach there meant a change of player personal. Trent Waterson was given his first break in senior football when he transferred from Green Gully to Sunshine George Cross in 2004 when the team won promotion to the V.P.L. The former Bendigo youngster has played 79 games for the Georgies and has managed 7 goals to date. Let's wish Trent a happy third home coming and hope by the end of this season Trent Waterson will reach a century of games for the Cross. He becomes the club's 5th signing for the season as the Georgies continue to build a squad capable of challenging for promotion.



Trent Waterson



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SCOREBOARD

TABLE	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Central Coast Mariners	19	12	4	3	30	15	15	40
2 Wellington Phoenix	20	10	3	7	29	22	7	33
3 Brisbane Roar	20	9	5	6	36	22	14	32
4 Perth Glory	20	9	4	7	30	25	5	31
5 Melbourne Heart	20	7	6	7	28	26	2	27
6 Newcastle Jets	20	7	4	9	27	32	-5	25
7 Sydney FC	20	6	6	8	26	34	-8	24
8 Melbourne Victory	20	4	10	6	24	30	-6	22
9 Adelaide United	20	4	8	8	21	35	-14	20
10 Gold Coast United	19	3	6	10	20	30	-10	15

ROUND 20 RESULTS

Adelaide United FC 1 (*Djite 10'*)
Wellington Phoenix 2 (*Brown 14', Sanchez 38'*)

Central Coast Mariners 0
Brisbane Roar 2 (*Paartalu 5', Berisha 38'*)

Melbourne Heart 0
Melbourne Victory 0

Sydney FC 2 (*Hirofumi Mori-yasu 47, Michael Beauchamp 72*).

Newcastle Jets 5 (*Nikolai Topor-Stanley 21, Ruben Zadkovich 28, Jeremy Brockie 38, 88, Ali Abbas 95*)

PERTH GLORY 4 (*McGarry 18', Miller 53', Dodd 67', Traore [og] 85'*)
GOLD COAST UNITED 0

TOP GOAL SCORERS

12 - Besart Berisha (Roar)
9 - Shane Smeltz (Glory)
8 - Jeremy Brockie (Jets)
7- Matt Simon (Mariners), Ryan Griffiths (Jets), Archie Thompson (Victory), Serge van Dijk (Adelaide Utd)
6- Carlos Hernandez (Vic-tory), Mate Dugandzic (Heart), Mitch Nichols (Roar), Bruno Cazarine (SFC)



Besart Berisha was the only shar-shooter to add to his tally last weekend.

THIS WEEK	Week 19	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
	Fri 10 Feb 2012	Melbourne Victory v Central Coast Mariners	AAMI Park	8:00pm	8:00pm
	Sat 11 Feb 2012	Newcastle Jets v Melbourne Heart	Ausgrid Stadium	5:30pm	5:30pm
	Sat 11 Feb 2012	Sydney FC v Perth Glory	Sydney Football Stadium	7:45pm	7:45pm
	Sun 12 Feb 2012	Wellington Phoenix v Brisbane Roar	Westpac Stadium	5:00pm	3:00pm
	Sun 12 Feb 2012	Gold Coast United v Adelaide United	Skilled Park	4:30pm	5:30pm
NEXT WEEK	Week 20	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
	Fri 17 Feb 2012	Melbourne Heart v Gold Coast United	AAMI Park	8:00pm	8:00pm
	Sat 18 Feb 2012	Central Coast Mariners v Wellington Phoenix	Bluetongue Stadium	5:30pm	5:30pm
	Sat 18 Feb 2012	Brisbane Roar v Melbourne Victory	Suncorp Stadium	6:45pm	7:45pm
	Sat 18 Feb 2012	Perth Glory v Newcastle Jets	nib Stadium	7:00pm	10:00pm
	Sun 19 Feb 2012	Adelaide United v Sydney FC	Hindmarsh Stadium	4:30pm	5:00pm

A-LEAGUE TEAM OF THE WEEK ROUND 20

Compiled by Steven Talevski



GK: Ante Covic – The experienced goalkeeper was at his best in the Melbourne Derby making a series of sublime saves highlighted by denying youngster Craig Goodwin a goal on his debut.

RB: Joshua Risdon – The nineteen year old continues to settle in the Perth Glory side which is currently in red hot form. Risdon was able to connect well with his fellow team mates and also looked the goods going down the wing.

CB: Bas van den Brink – The Dutchman may have had a relatively quiet Monday night but was a solid rock in defence for Perth as he blocked a header from Jonas Salley at a corner to deny any chance of a Gold Coast comeback.

CB: Nikolai Topor-Stanley – Despite the Jets conceding two goals, Topor-Stanley had a good game controlling his sides back four when it looked like Sydney FC might pull off a comeback to earn a result at the SFS. The central defender also chipped in with a goal in his side's impressive victory.

LB: Craig Goodwin – The former Oakleigh Cannons full back had a great debut for the Melbourne Heart and was unlucky not to score the winner when his long range effort was saved by Victory goalkeeper Ant Covic.

RCM: Tim Brown – The central midfielder made a fantastic run and to meet a great Paul Ifill pass to score the equaliser against Adelaide on the way to Wellington's important away victory.

LCM: Liam Miller – Miller bagged his second goal in eight days while also claiming an assist in Adama Traore's own goal.

RW: Mile Sterjovski – Sterjovski continued his run of great form with two of Perth Glory's four goals coming from his set pieces.

CAM: Steven McGarry – The Scot was one of Perth's best against Gold Coast as he was able to consistently unlock the Gold Coast defence with some great passes to play in Shane Smeltz. McGarry also found himself on the score sheet with a simple header.

LW: Jeremy Brockie – The New Zealand international scored a brace against his old club as the Jets went on to thump Sydney FC 5-2 in a local state derby.

ST: Paul Ifill – Last week's star man continued his great run of form with a solid game against Adelaide United. Ifill played a pivotal role in the Phoenix's come from behind victory assisting in their equaliser with a sublime first touch of the ball matched up by a great pass to Tim Brown.

Star Man

Craig Goodwin
Melbourne Heart



The twenty year old had a debut which he will remember as pundits have called it one of the best, if not the best first professional game seen in the A-League. Spotted by the Heart while playing for the Oakleigh Cannons in the Victorian Premier League, Goodwin was able to take the rare first team opportunity with both hands as he had a man of the match performance in the Melbourne derby. The Adelaide born youngster was solid in defence and a dangerous threat down the left wing and would have bagged a winning goal from a long range effort if it was not for a fantastic save from Ante Covic.

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Adelaide United

1

Wellington Phoenix

2

Match Details

Adelaide United FC 1 (Djite 10')
Wellington Phoenix 2 (Brown 14', Sanchez 38')
 Referee: Gerard Parsons
 Crowd: 8,425 @ Hindmarsh Stadium

Adelaide United line-up: 1.Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c), 2.Osama Malik, 3.Nigel Boogaard, 6.Cassio, 8.Evgeniy Levchenko, 9.Sergio van Dijk, 10.Dario Vidosic (15. Jacob Melling 75'), 11.Bruce Djite, 14.Cameron Watson, 17.Iain Ramsay (7.Zenon Caravella 63'), 18.Fabian Barbiero

Substitutes not used: 21.Francisco Usucar, 30.Paul Izzo (gk)
 Yellow Cards: Malik 37'
 Red Cards: Nil

Wellington Phoenix line-up: 1.Mark Paston (gk), 2.Manny Muscat, 3.Tony Lochhead, 6.Tim Brown, 7.Leo Bertos, 8.Paul Ifill, 9.Chris Greenacre (17.Vince Lia 70'), 18.Ben Sigmund, 21.Dani Sanchez (11.Daniel 63'), 22.Andrew Durante (c), 24.Alex Smith

Substitutes not used: 19.Jimmy Downey, 20.Tony Warner (gk)
 Yellow Cards: Muscat 54', Sigmund 78', Ifill 87', Daniel 90+3'
 Red Cards: Nil

High-flying Phoenix cement second spot

By Nat Adamopoulos

Wellington Phoenix continued their fine form this season with a quality 2-1 win at Hindmarsh Stadium against Adelaide United, with Tim brown and Dani Sanchez each scoring a goal for the visitors.

Despite The Reds fans welcoming back their pocket rocket Brazilian dynamo Cassio with rousing applause after a two month absence and Ukrainian signing Evgeniy Levchenko returning, the visitors were the ones to taste victory leaving the Stadium and the 'fortress' tag for the homieside all but non existent but their coach Rickie Herbert all smiles as they extended their winning run to four matches.

As was the case the previous match, the Reds got off to a good start with a fast paced first few opening minutes, attacking to create chances that went begging in previous weeks, this time paying off early. In the 10th minute Sergio Van Dijk put a beautiful ball in for Dario Vidosic and with the Phoenix defence erring Bruce Djite pounced with a left footer that cracked the net. A quick succession of shots in a matter of minutes felt like déjà vu from the Glory game, firstly with Reds whippet Iain Ramsay testing Wellington's keeper Mark Paston, then Van Dijk getting a header on a Vidosic free kick that saw the woodwork do the defending and the goals not forthcoming.

But the Reds dream start was all but rubbed out as Phoenix capitalised with a counter attack themselves, the master Paul Ifil doing the damage with a ball in for Brown to find the back of the net with relative ease in the 13th minute. With the home crowd disputing the goal looking for an off-side ruling, the Reds gathered themselves to continue to create chances. Addressing the lack of character criticism, it was Ramsay yet again in the 32nd minute shooting just wide of the left post.

But it was the Phoenix to take their created chances, this time with just 7 minutes to go before the half time break. Another decision by the assistant referee Curtis Wordsworth had the 8,425 crowd asking the question again, after Chris Greenacre found the head of Sanchez who made no mistake in giving Wellington a 2-1 lead.

The stadium was in a state of disbelief and as the two sides went in for the half time break, the fans let the officials know their thoughts to the sounds of boos and jeers.



Match Stats		
1	Saves	2
3	Attempts on target	4
6	Attempts off target	5
49%	Possession	51%
6	Corners	0
4	Offsides	0
5	Fouls committed	11

Daniel Sanchez delivers the goods for the Nix, making sure that sitting in second place is no accident. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

With the restart after the break the game began to unravel with some huge character shown by Adelaide United. Cassio was the instigator, almost gesturing to invite his team mates to play, some beautiful football played to see Ramsay curling one in at Paston who took the ball safely. Then at the 54th minute It was Cassio himself just 30 metres out from goal, rifling one in that forced Paston to dive to prevent the Brazilian from equalizing.

Although Adelaide were creating chances Reds boss John Kosmina made a change, taking Ramsay off for Zenon Caravella to try to inject some more potency to break the deficit. But the Phoenix defence were

themselves showing character, Ifil the star of the show. With barely 15 minutes to go in the match, the marksman let go of a shot upfield that skimmed the cross bar, giving the fans a moment that saw their mouths a gasp.

Then barely a minute passed when he kissed the woodwork with a power drive, fans clutching at their scarves and jackets acknowledging the close call.

Adelaide found themselves down on luck as another chance went begging minutes later through some great play by Fabian Barbiero, Djite and Caravella. Then as Djite was brought down by Ben Sigmund just outside the box in a last line of defence,

the fans were expecting referee Parsons to dish out a red card. But Parsons deemed otherwise showing a yellow instead which sent the crowd into raptures of disappointment. The tables then turned with Wellington missing out on a penalty when Ifil was brought down in the box, the striker livid earning himself a yellow card through his dissent towards the referee. Young Red Osama Malik almost made himself a hero in injury time as his header in front of goal went narrowly astray, not missing by much but the opportunity well and truly gone.

Kosmina although disappointed and making the top six even more difficult now, gave credit for the way his chargers played

this time out.

"It was a fantastic effort. We played some really good football, we made a stack of chances as we did last week, this time one went in at least, so that's a positive," Kosmina said.

"The boys gave everything. Last week I maybe questioned that they dropped their heads, this week they fought from start to finish and the punters can't complain about that, we went down fighting and that's the Adelaide spirit, that's what it's all about at this club. We've just got seven games and we've got to win them, and I think we're good enough," Kosmina said.



Bruce Djite reels away after snatching the opening goal for the Reds. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



It didn't take long before Tim Brown put the Kiwis back on level terms. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

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CC Mariners



0

Brisbane Roar



2

Match Details

Central Coast Mariners 0
Brisbane Roar 2 (Paartalu 5', Berisha 38')
Referee: Kris Griffiths-Jones
Crowd: 10, 217 At Bluetongue Stadium, Gosford

Central Coast Mariners: 20. Justin Pasfield (Gk), 2. Daniel McBreen, 3. Joshua Rose, 4. Pedj Bojic, 6. Patrick Zwaanswijk, 8. Rostyn Griffiths (16. Trent Sainsbury 82'), 9. Bernie Ibini, 10. Adriano Pellegrino (17. Tomas Rogic 66'), 12. Troy Hearfield (23. Adam Kwasnik 46'), 14. Michael McGlinchey, 18. Alex Wilkinson (C)

Subs Not Used: 31. Brody Crane (Gk)

Yellow Cards: Pellegrino 13', McBreen 35', Zwaanswijk 44', Bojic 75', Sainsbury 88'
Red Cards: None

Brisbane Roar: 1. Michael Theoklitos (Gk), 2. Matthew Smith (C), 3. Shane Stefanutto, 5. Ivan Frajic, 6. Erik Paartalu, 7. Besart Berisha, 8. Massimo Murdocca, 10. Henrique (21. James Meyer 61'), 16. Mohamed Adnan, 22. Thomas Broich, 24. Nick Fitzgerald (25. George Lambadaridis 82')

Subs Not Used: 20. Andrew Redmayne (Gk), 12. Matthew Mundy

Yellow Cards: None
Red Cards: None

Roar returns to form against Mariners

By Adrian Deans

There were two big questions going into this game. Which team would most miss their Olyroos? And where will Graham Arnold be coaching next year?

The Sydney FC forum was going berserk during the week about the fact that Arnold had been linked with Vitezslav Lavicka's job, and the question hung over Bluetongue Stadium like a dark cloud (even darker than the cloud it cast over the Cove).

As for the Olyroos – the Mariners were always more likely to miss Mat Ryan, Ollie Bozanic and Mustafa Amini more than the Roar would miss Mitch Nichols and Rocky Visconte. That's no reflection on the Roar players – it's simply that Mat Ryan has pulled the Mariners out of a few holes this season, and going forward, the Mariners play their best football when Amini has time and space to weave his magic. They were certainly missed.

Not least on four minutes when Eric Paartalu smacked home young Nick Fitzgerald's deflected cross from the edge of the box. To be fair, he took it very well and Pasfield would have been unsighted – no-one could say with any confidence that Ryan would have done better. But he might well have for the second goal which came 30 minutes later.

Before that however, Thomas Broich smashed a 30 metre drive against the post in the 18th minute and then came the big talking point of the first half. Besart Berisha (back from suspension) inspired the fury of the home fans when he went to ground on 30 minutes after a challenge by Patrick Zwaanswijk and stayed there for quite some time when obviously unhurt (as the replays showed).

The replays also suggested that maybe he should have had a free kick, but A-League fans do not appreciate those who stay down feigning injury. The home support were fuming therefore when, soon after, Berisha scored the second goal after a masterful first time ball played in by Massimo Murdocca. Berisha still had work to do but his fairly tame shot somehow crept



Besart Berisha's shot eludes the outstretched hands of Justin Pasfield. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS

under Pasfield, which was hard on the Mariners when on the balance of play they might well have been level.

Thomas Broich had an excellent first half, providing the link between midfield and strikers which the Roar had missed during their slump. The other stand out performance of the first half was Mohamed Adnan (whose harrowing story has been featured in the media lately). The Bahraini has grown in confidence in recent weeks and snuffed out numerous chances – most notably against Troy Hearfield and Bernie Ibini, who is supposed to be one of the fastest strikers in the league. So he is without the ball at his feet – as soon as he gets the ball however he slows down

dramatically.

The second half was always going to be about whether the Mariners could re-establish their usual patterns going forward. In fact, they might have had a penalty in the 48th minute – Daniel McBreen was clipped by Henrique in the act of shooting and penalties have been given for less (especially at home).

But the match ground on and the standard attacking options never quite got going. Rose and Bojic didn't have anything like their usual impact on the game, meaning that McGlinchey, McBreen and Ibini weren't getting the ball where they like it (and Amini grew increasingly conspicuous in his absence).

We did get to see another cameo by young Tomas Rogic (one of the winners of the Nike Challenge) with a few flashes of quality, but Mariners fans grew increasingly frustrated as the match wound down to its conclusion without further troubling of the scorers (and in fact with little troubling of the keepers).

It was a fairly sound technical game in the second half, if mostly fought out in the middle third. The game achieved little as a pointer to the final series, as the Mariners were missing two of their most important players. Justin Pasfield didn't have his best ever game, but it's not easy to come in cold and do a job against the most suc-

cessful team of the last 12 months. The Mariners will be desperate to get Ryan back – whose exceptional performances in goal might have been papering over a more fundamental problem. And the coaching question?

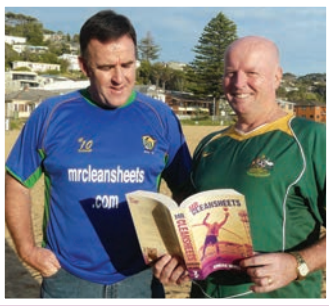
At the press conference after the game, Graham Arnold was asked about the rumours in the papers – to which he reacted quite astonishingly, suggesting quite angrily that he never reads the papers and didn't understand the question. Really?

He could hardly have done more to confirm the Mariners fans' greatest fear.

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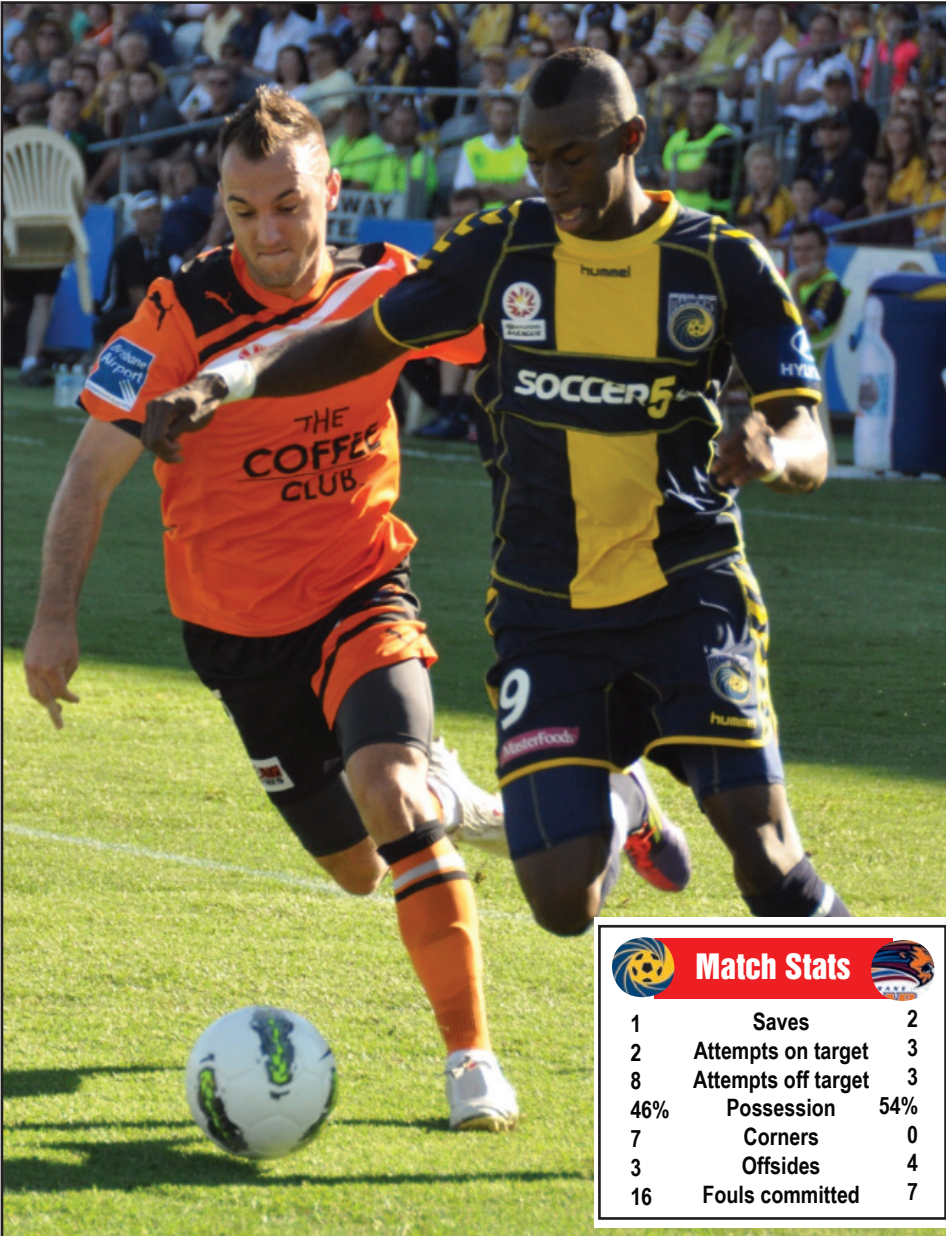
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– Eric Cantona

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– Arsene Wenger

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Match Stats		
1	Saves	2
2	Attempts on target	3
8	Attempts off target	3
46%	Possession	54%
7	Corners	0
3	Offsides	4
16	Fouls committed	7

Roar's Ivan Franjic is hot on the heels of Mariner Bernie Ibini.
Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS

Melbourne Heart

HEART

Melbourne Victory

Match Details

Melbourne Heart 0
Melbourne Victory 0
Venue: AAMI Park
Referees: Jarred Gillet
Attendance: 26,359

Melbourne Heart: 1.Clint Bolton ,
2.Michael Marrone, 4.Simon Colosimo,
7.Rutger Worm, 8.Kristian Sarkies,
10.Wayne Srhoj (26.Paul Reid 79'),
11.Alex Terra (15.David Williams 70'),
13.Jonatan Germano, 18.Curtis Good,
19.Eli Babalj, 27.Craig Goodwin,

Unused substitutes: 30.Sebastian Mattei,
3.Brendan Hamill

Yellow cards: Wayne Srhoj 30', Rutger Worm 71'
Red cards: Nil

Melbourne Victory: 21. Ante Covic (GK), 3. Fabio, 4. Petar Franjic, 5.Mark Milligan, 6. Leigh Broxham, 8. Grant Brebner, 9. Jean Carlos Solorzano (16.Carlos Hernandez 71'), 10. Archie Thompson, 11. Marco Rojas, 22. Harry Kewell (18. Danny Allsopp, 61') 23. Adrian Leijer

Unused substitutes: 1.Tando Velaphi, 12. Rodrigo Vargas

Yellow cards: Grant Brebner 34'
Red cards: Grant Brebner 75'

Stalemate in Melbourne Derby

By Daniel Quinn

The third Melbourne Derby has finished 0-0 at AAMI Park on Saturday night although Heart would have felt like they could have got more out of the encounter after Grant Brebner was sent off.

Hosts for the Melbourne Derby Melbourne Heart made three changes with Simon Colosimo and Wayne Srhoj coming in for Mate Dugandzic and the injured Matt Thompson. National Youth League vice captain Craig Goodwin also made his A-League debut instead of Aziz Behich who has been called up to the Olyroos squad. Victory made one change with Petar Franjic coming in for the injured Matthew Kemp.

After a slow opening ten minutes Heart created the first chance of the Derby with Srhoj making a great run forward before passing off to Rutger Worm but the Dutchman shot wide.

But two minutes later they should have opened the scoring. Kristian Sarkies' free-kick was headed back across the goal by Colosimo before Eli Babalj flicked it on to Jonatan Germano whose header thundered the crossbar.

For the first opening 25 minutes Victory struggled to get the ball forward but after Goodwin gave the ball away Leigh Broxham played in Jean-Carlos Solorzano but the Costa Rica went agonisingly close to open the scoring.

Only seconds later Ante Covic denied a Sarkies free-kick with an outstanding save to keep the game scoreless.

Just before the break Solorzano had other chance but he scuffed his effort wide of Clint Bolton's net.

Victory came out in the second stanza like a different side and Marco Rojas shot wide of net with a left footed effort.

This continued four minutes later as Harry Kewell who had almost an anonymous first-half cut in from the left but fired into the stands.

M	Match Stats	Melbourne Victory
2	Saves	4
4	Attempts on target	2
11	Attempts off target	6
65%	Possession	35%
7	Corners	2
0	Offsides	3
13	Fouls committed	7

Both teams were desperate for a win, and a draw was a result neither were looking for. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

On 60 minutes Solorzano went close as he beat a couple defenders before shooting from the edge of the box but his shot narrowly missed the net.

Seconds later Solorzano scored after a great ball from Rojas but the Assistant Referee correctly ruled the goal out for offside.

Second-half substitute Danny Allsopp next narrowly went wide with his effort with Archie Thompson trying to poke home but the Soccerroo failed to get a stud onto the ball.

On 68 minutes both sides had chances. Firstly with Worm who cut onto his left foot and nutmegged two defenders before Covic comfortably saved. Then

seconds later with Allsopp whose left footed long distance effort just went missed the post.

On 74 minutes Melbourne Victory were down to 10 as Grant Brebner was given a straight red card for a studs-up challenge on Babalj.

With a man less than their opponents Victory surprisingly pushed forward with Thompson cutting in from the left but his curling effort was denied by Bolton.

Second-half substitute David Williams next created the best chance of the game as he beat Fabio on the right wing before passing to an unmarked Sarkies but the former Victory mid-

fielder fired well over with only Covic to beat.

Heart continued to look for a winner with debutant Goodwin causing more havoc down the left and his next shot a powerful effort but Covic made a fantastic save.

With two minutes left of normal time Michael Marrone pushed forward and a tested Covic from 25 yards out but his powerful effort was fired just wide of the upright.

Even though both sides pushed for a winner it finished nil-all, a result which doesn't help either side in their chances of making the finals.

Melbourne Heart coach John van 't

Schip believed his sides should have taken all three points. "Yeah, looking at the way we played, the possession we had and chances also. But I think not only the first-half but the second-half was open and I think in the second-half we didn't get what we wanted which was three points."

Melbourne Victory coach Jim Magilton was pleased to come away with a draw with ten men. "Yeah, I am pleased when you go down to ten men and with backs against the wall. We showed grit, determination, all the characteristics you need and they dug in together and showed a great togetherness. So they are real positives for me and we need to build on this and carry it through."



Victory's Carlos Solorzano slips one past Clint Bolton, only to be ruled offside. Photo: TIM SIZE



Victory's Grant Brebner gets an early bath after his second bookable offence. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

BE A PART OF MELBOURNE'S HEART

Sydney FC



2

Newcastle Jets



5

Match Details

Sydney FC 2 (Hirofumi Moriyasu 47, Michael Beauchamp 72).
Newcastle Jets 5 (Nikolai Topor-Stanley 21, Ruben Zadkovich 28, Jeremy Brockie 38, 88, Ali Abbas 95)
Sydney Football Stadium
Crowd: 10,232
Referee: Matt Gillett

Sydney FC: 1. Liam Reddy, 4. Pascal Bosschaart, 5. Michael Beauchamp, 6. Hirofumi Moriyasu (22. Nathan Sherlock '78), 8. Karol Kisel, 9. Bruno Cazarine, 10 Nick Carle, 15. Terry McFlynn (c) (16. Joel Chianese '64), 19. Mark Bridge (18. Juho Makela '36), 21. Scott Jamieson, 23. Rhyann Grant.
Sub not used: 20. Ivan Necevski (gk).

Yellow cards: McFlynn 23.
Red cards: Nil

Newcastle: 1. Ben Kennedy, 2. Taylor Regan (13. Sung-Hwan Byun '72), 4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley, 5. Tiago Calvano, 8. Jeremy Brockie, 10. Ruben Zadkovich, 11. Tarek Elrich (22. Ali Abbas '72), 12. Jobe Wheelhouse, 23. Ryan Griffiths, 24. Francis Jeffers (9. Michael Bridges '67), 25. Jacob Pepper.
Sub not used: 19. Matthew Nash (gk).

Yellow cards: Taylor Regan 54, Jacob Pepper 67.
Red cards: Nil.

Jets soar over SFC in cracking contest

By Mike Salter

Sydney FC's home woes continued on Sunday as they conceded five goals at the Sydney Football Stadium for the first time in the club's history against a motivated and inventive Newcastle Jets.

Both defences looked decidedly vulnerable early on. In only the second minute, Scott Jamieson's gently-struck free kick found an unmarked Michael Beauchamp in the box, but the Sydney defender could not direct his header on target. A few minutes later, Mark Bridge found himself free in this inside-right channel, but squared the ball instead of shooting, and Nikolai Topor-Stanley cleared the danger. Tarek Elrich managed a shot on target at the other end immediately afterwards, although Liam Reddy was hardly troubled at this near post.

An excellent chance for Newcastle arrived on 18 minutes when Elrich cut inside and played a neat pass through to Francis Jeffers. Picking his way through the Sydney defence, the former England international worked himself into a shooting position but slid his effort just wide of the far post.

Newcastle opened the scoring on 22 minutes. Captain Jobe Wheelhouse swung in a dipping corner from the left, and Ryan Griffiths' glancing header was cleared only as far as Topor-Stanley, whose deft looping header drifted into the inside netting of the goal, with Reddy stranded. Yet again, Sydney FC had conceded the first goal in a home game.

Only seven minutes later, the demoralised hosts conceded another, and it was a former Sydney player who found the mark. A long ball forward from Wheelhouse was expertly headed on by Elrich, and Ruben Zadkovich, charging down the left, sent in a superb cross-shot which left Reddy with no chance. A point-blank save by Ben Kennedy from Bridge straight afterwards, following momentary confusion in the Newcastle box, could not have helped the home team's spirits.

On 37 minutes it was three. Jeffers again found space in a tight midfield



	Match Stats	
2	Saves	4
7	Attempts on target	7
13	Attempts off target	5
52%	Possession	48%
3	Corners	1
5	Offsides	4
12	Fouls committed	12

The Jets rejoice with travelling fans after Ali Abbas put the match beyond doubt in the closing stages. Photo: GEOFF JONES

area and prodded a pass through to Elrich on the left; an accurate cross to the far post, and another former Sky Blue, Jeremy Brockie, made no mistake with a free header at the far post. By half-time, the Sydney heads were well and truly down.

Within two minutes of the restart, however, Sydney had pulled one back. Receiving from Carle on the left, Hirofumi Moriyasu, who had been quite peripheral in the first period, cut inside Taylor Regan and fired a crisp right-footed shot past Kennedy from just inside the area.

Jeffers shot just over the bar on 51 minutes, but the initiative was with Syd-

ney as the second half settled into a rhythm. It should have been 2-3 on the hour when Scott Jamieson's right-wing corner was cleared to Karol Kisel, who shot over the bar from only eight yards. Young Joel Chianese came on for a disappointing Terry McFlynn as Vitezslav Lavicka sought to add more attacking impetus to this side. The away side made a change, too, with the experienced Michael Bridges replacing his tiring compatriot Jeffers.

Chianese, released by Carle on the left, forced Kennedy into an awkward reflex save on 69 minutes, as Newcastle began to look ragged in defence. With the pressure mounting, Sydney

moved within a goal of their opponents two minutes later. A cross from the right found Bruno Cazarine, who prodded the ball across the Newcastle goal-mouth; substitute Juho Makela couldn't make contact, but Beauchamp, rushing on ahead of the Newcastle defence, did, blasting the ball home from close range. Was it to be another late show from Sydney?

Bridges flashed a ball just wide of the Sydney goal within a minute of the goal, but the Sydney onslaught continued. Makela burst through on 79 minutes, but a poor touch allowed Kennedy to smother the chance.

It was a moment of individual brilliance

that allowed Newcastle to restore their two-goal buffer. Ali Abbas, on as a substitute for Elrich, received the ball on the left and surged upfield with Sydney's players massed at the other end. A clever shimmy took him past Beauchamp, and it was one on one: Abbas shot, Reddy parried, but Brockie was on hand to tap in his second of the afternoon.

Insult was added to injury in the final minute of added time, with Ali Abbas getting on the scoresheet himself; a delightful pass from Bridges to Brockie saw the latter lay the ball off unselfishly to his left, for the Iraqi-born winger to fire home.



Jets' Nikolai Topor-Stanley opens the scoring in a humdinger of a contest. Photo: BEN NEVILLE



The Jets are all smiles and race to a 3-0 lead before half-time. Photo: GEOFF JONES

Perth Glory



4

Gold Coast United



0

Match Details

PERTH GLORY 4 (McGarry 18', Miller 53', Dodd 67', Traore [og] 85')
GOLD COAST UNITED 0
 HT: 1-0
 At nib Stadium, Perth
 Crowd: 7691
 Referee: Alan Milliner

Perth Glory: 1.Danny Vukovic [gk], 3.Bas van den Brink, 5.Steve Pantelidis, 7.Jacob Burns (c) (8.Adam Hughes 76'), 9.Shane Smeltz (4.Billy Mehmet 72'), 10.Liam Miller, 13.Travis Dodd, 14.Steven McGarry, 19.Josh Risdon, 21.Mile Sterjovski, 35.Dean Heffernan (27.Andrezinho 86').
 Unused subs: 30.Lewis Italiano [gk].

Yellow cards: Pantelidis 31', Heffernan 57', Hughes 81'.
 Red cards: None.

Gold Coast United: 40.Chris O'Connor [gk], 3.Michael Thwaite (c), 5.Kristian Rees, 13.Ante Rozic, 14.Ben Halloran, 15.Adama Traore, 16.Maceo Rigters, 17.Chris Harold (7.Golgol Mebrahtu 79'), 22.Peter Jungschlager (21.Daniel Severino 46'), 23.Dylan McGowan (2.Josh Brillante 61'), 24.Jonas Salley.
 Unused subs: 30.Brendan White [gk].

Yellow cards: Thwaite 55', Halloran 88'.
 Red cards: None.

Perth sink Gold Coast in the west

By Neil Favager

HIGH flying Perth Glory rattled home three second half strikes to go with one in the first, sinking Gold Coast United by four goals to nil in what was a disappointing night in the west for Miron Bleiberg's men.

The in-form home side showed their intent early on and United were on the back foot from the outset, falling behind to a Steven McGarry header just after the quarter hour.

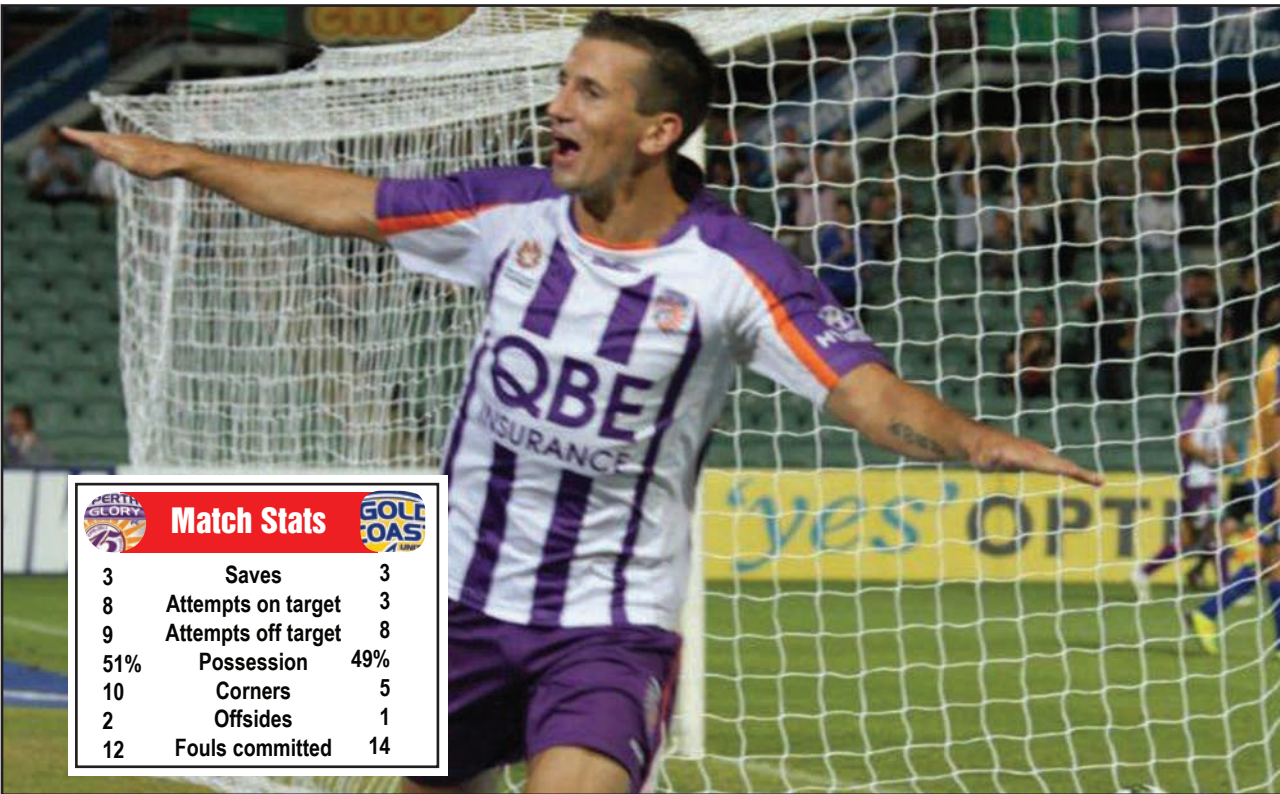
The breakthrough came after a sustained period of pressure from Ian Ferguson's side, during which Michael Thwaite bravely blocked a Sterjovski shot and Jacob Burns scraped the post from outside the box.

The dangerous Sterjovski was instrumental in the opener, whipping in a perfect corner that was nodded home at the far post by McGarry after Travis Dodd had flicked the ball on.

It was a forgettable first half an hour for United but two chances in the space of a minute showed the slenderness of Perth's 1-0 lead. Ante Rozic looped a header from Halloran's free-kick just over the bar, then Peter Jungschlager drilled a fearsome effort towards goal that Perth keeper Danny Vukovic did well to save.

Perth again turned up the heat again though and could have been out of sight had former United man Shane Smeltz converted any of three golden opportunities he had to increase his side's lead before the break.

With the goal gaping the New Zealand striker shot wide from the edge



	Match Stats	
3	Saves	3
8	Attempts on target	3
9	Attempts off target	8
51%	Possession	49%
10	Corners	5
2	Offsides	1
12	Fouls committed	14

It's Miller time! Glory's Liam Miller doubles the lead and makes it 2-0. Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN

of the box, then struck the post and with another effort with only United custodian Chris O'Connor to beat. Moments later Smeltz was left frustrated again as O'Connor did well to close down the space and deny the Perth poacher with a fine save.

Jungschlager had spent much of the first half struggling with a rib injury and the Dutchman could not continue into the second period with Daniel Severino coming on in his place.

Two excellent dead ball deliveries from Severino almost bore fruit for

United with Rees glancing one over the bar and Chris Harold just failing to connect with another.

Perth carried on where they left off though and eight minutes after the restart Liam Miller doubled their lead. Dylan McGowan and Smeltz challenged for a Travis Dodd cross from the right and the ball dropped invitingly for Miller who stroked the ball past O'Connor from close range.

Jonas Salley went as close as anyone to scoring for the visitors midway through the half when he

connected with a fine cross from substitute Josh Brillante, only to be denied by former Gold Coaster Bas van den Brink who cleared off the line.

On 66 minutes O'Connor produced a flying, one-handed save to keep out a sizzling strike from Burns. However, from the resulting corner Glory made it 3-0 when Dodd rose highest to beat Rozic to the ball and thunder his near post header into the net.

Harold sliced a shot wide when put through by a fine ball from Kris-

tian Rees as Gold Coast looked to restore some pride on the scoreboard, but they were dealt a further blow five minutes from time as Glory added a fourth goal.

Sterjovski was involved again, stealing the ball in midfield then releasing Miller down the left hand side. Miller's near post cross was aimed at Billy Mehmet, but went past O'Conner via the head of the unfortunate Adama Traore who was under pressure from the Perth striker.



Gold Coast keeper Chris O'Connor had a busy night as Glory players celebrate in the background. Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN



All for one and one for all: Glory are now unbeaten in 8 games and have their eyes set on a first A-League finals appearance. Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN

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Victory Line Up

Melbourne Victory squad:

1. Tando Velaphi (gk)
3. Fabio
4. Petar Franjic
5. Mark Milligan
6. Leigh Broxham
9. Jean Carlos Solorzano
10. Archie Thompson
11. Marco Rojas
12. Rodrigo Vargas
16. Carlos Hernandez
17. Jimmy Jeggo
18. Danny Allsopp
21. Ante Covic (GK)
22. Harry Kewell
23. Adrian Leijer (c)
24. Ubay Luzardo
25. Luke O'Dea
- *two to be omitted*

In: 12. Rodrigo Vargas (promoted), 17. Jimmy Jeggo (promoted), 24. Ubay Luzardo (new signing), Luke O'Dea (promoted)

Out: 8. Grant Brebner (suspended)

Unavailable: 7. Matthew Kemp (injured), 8. Grant Brebner (suspended), 20. Lawrence Thomas (GK) (omitted), 13. Diogo Ferreira (Qantas Australian U23 duty), 2. Matthew Foschini (Qantas Australian U23 duty), 19. Isaka Cernak (Qantas Australian U23 duty)

Melbourne Victory v CC Mariners

Fri 10 Feb AAMI Park 8:00pm



All hands on deck for Mariners visit

been in charge and it is not acceptable particularly from leaders of the club in Brebner and Allsopp.

The Central Coast's unbeaten run of 15 games was, somewhat predictably, shattered on the weekend by defending champions the Brisbane Roar. After a month of 'winning ugly' the Mariners were upstaged by the Roar in what should be an ominous warning to the rest of the competition that the Roar are awakening from a mid season slumber. In all honesty the Mariners have been fairly unimpressive since their 2-0 win over the Victory in early January. That match signified the end of club legend Matt Simon's time

in Gosford and he was the hero scoring twice. Since that day the Mariners have played five times for three wins, a draw and a loss. The fact that they have been far from their best and have still managed to grab 10 from a possible 15 points, just further underlines their championship credentials. Replacing Matt Simon has proved an arduous task for Graham Arnold, although this week the Mariners announced the signing of John Sutton whose goal scoring in Scotland is fairly imposing. Unfortunately for the Mariners Sutton looks unlikely to line up against the Victory, while Melbourne with have to juggle its midfield in the absence of

Grant Brebner. One possible option for Jim Magilton would be to push Mark Milligan into a holding midfielder's role, while giving a debut starting berth to Spanish defender Ubay Lorenzo.

A win for the Victory here might just be the tonic they need to get their season back on track; alternatively a loss would all but end hopes of a final berth and put a lot of suffering fans out of their misery. Unfortunately I can see another draw and another week of 'it's only a matter of time before we click' and 'our season starts this weekend' quotes.

**Kiss of Death
Victory 1- 1 Mariners**



Mariners Line Up

2. Daniel MCBREEN
3. Joshua ROSE,
6. Patrick ZWAANSWIJK
7. John HUTCHINSON
8. Rostyn GRIFFITHS
9. Bernie IBINI
10. Adriano PELLEGRINO
14. Michael MCGLINCHIEY
16. Trent SAINSBURY
17. Tomas ROGIC
18. Alex WILKINSON (C)
20. Justin PASFIELD (Gk)
21. Sam GALLAHER
23. Adam KWASNIK
24. Mitchell DUKE
31. Brody CRANE (Gk)

In: 7. John HUTCHINSON (returns from suspension), 21. Sam GALLAHER (promoted), 24. Mitchell DUKE (promoted)

Out: 4. Pedj BOJIC, 12. Troy HEARFIELD

Unavailable: 1. Mathew RYAN (Qantas Australian Under 23 duty), 4. Pedj BOJIC (knee – indefinite), 11. Oliver BOZANIC (Qantas Australian Under 23 duty), 12. Troy HEARFIELD (hamstring – 1 – 2 weeks), 22. Mustafa AMINI (Qantas Australian Under 23 duty)



Jets Line Up

1. Ben Kennedy (gk)
2. Taylor Regan
4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley
5. Tiago Calvano
8. Jeremy Brockie
9. Michael Bridges
10. Ruben Zadkovich
11. Tarek Elrich
12. Jobe Wheelhouse (c)
13. Byun
14. Labinot Haliti
17. James Virgili
18. Marko Jesic
19. Matthew Nash (gk)
22. Ali Abbas
23. Ryan Griffiths
24. Francis Jeffers
25. Jacob Pepper

In: Haliti, Virgili, Jesic (all promoted).

Out: Nil

Unavailable: 6. Ben Kantarovski (Qantas Australian U23 duty)

Newcastle Jets v Melbourne Heart

Sat 11 Feb Ausgrid Stadium 5:30pm

By Shaun Dyas

As the Newcastle Jets prepare to take on the Melbourne Heart this Saturday at Ausgrid Stadium, the rival fans will likely be thinking the same thing.

What a difference a few weeks can make in football.

Little over 3 weeks ago the Jets season appeared to be in tatters. They had just been beaten in a dull and scrappy affair by The Wellington Phoenix and some home fans were beginning to consign the season to the dustbin.

The gloomy mood around the club was only heightened by the anxiety of having to play their next 3 games away from Ausgrid, where they had not won in over a year.

In a stunning form reversal, the Jets managed a draw against Adelaide in Bathurst and wins against the highly fancied Brisbane Roar and Sydney FC.

In fact last week's 5-2 demolition of Sydney has the squad flying high with confidence and beginning to believe that not only is finals football possible, but a home final could be secured.

This contrasts starkly to the form of the Heart. A month ago the Melbourne club were scaling the heights of the competition and looked to be a genuine title threat. Unfortunately for them, an injury to key playmaker Fred has coincided with a disappointing run of

Odds:
Jets 2.25
Draw 3.35
Heart 3.45



Confident Jets keen to continue Heart Problem

form leaving them winless in their last 5 matches.

This poor run of form has made this match even more vital as the Jets will overtake the Heart and move into fifth position on the ladder if they win on the weekend.

Newcastle will be confident of beating the Heart given that they have almost a full squad available with Ben Kantarovski being the only major absentee as he is away on Olyroos duty. Conversely, the Heart will be missing 3 Olyroos in Aziz Behic, Jason Hoffman and Mate Dugandzic.

Dugandzic in particular will be sorely

missed as he has been a key player with his pace and guile since shifting from arch rivals the Melbourne Victory at the beginning of the season. Another issue for the Heart is the fact that coach John Van't Schip has decided to return home at the end of the season. The timing of this announcement has been questioned by some who feel that the matter should have been dealt with in house and announced when the season is over.

With all these issues bubbling away it seems that the Heart will struggle to overcome the rejuvenated Jets. The home side would love nothing more

than consolidating their position in the top six in front of their adoring fans. Although it is dangerous to tip against the Heart, who despite their recent form have been a competitive and dangerous opponent, something major seems to be happening in the Jets camp.

The players have started to adapt to Gary Van Egmond's playing style and are starting to stretch the best of defences and should be able to score enough goals to get the win over a largely inexperienced Heart defence.

**Kiss of Death
Jets 3-2 Heart**

MELBOURNE
HEART



Heart Line Up

1. Clint Bolton (GK)
2. Michael Marrone
3. Brendan Hamill
4. Simon Colosimo
5. Fred (C)
7. Rutger Worm
8. Kristian Sarkies
9. Maycon
10. Wayne Srhoj
11. Alex Terra
13. Jonatan Germano
15. David Williams
18. Curtis Good
19. Eli Babalj
26. Paul Reid
27. Craig Goodwin
30. Sebastian Mattei (GK)
- *two to be omitted*

In: Fred (returns from injury), Maycon (promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Nick Kalmar (back - 1 week), Matt Thompson (knee 2-3 weeks)

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HUNTER SPORTS
SUPERSTORE





Sydney FC Line Up

1. Liam Reddy
3. Jamie Coyne
4. Pascal Bosschaert
5. Michael Beauchamp
6. Hirofumi Moriyasu
7. Brett Emerton
8. Karol Kisel
9. Bruno Cazarine
10. Nick Carle
12. Shannon Cole
16. Joel Chianese
18. Juho Makela
20. Ivan Necevski
21. Scott Jamieson
22. Nathan Sherlock
23. Rhyan Grant
24. Mitch Mallia

In: Mitch Mallia (promoted), Jamie Coyne (promoted), Brett Emerton (returns from injury)

Out: Mark Bridge (ankle – 4 weeks), Terry McFlynn (suspended – 1 week)

Unavailable: Dimi Petratos (Qantas Australian U23 duty), Sebastian Ryall (Qantas Australian U23 duty), Terry Antonis (hamstring, 3 weeks)

Sydney FC v Perth Glory

Sat 11 Feb Sydney Football Stdm 7:45pm

By Mike Salter

Two teams in contrasting form do battle at the Sydney Football Stadium on Saturday evening. Ian Ferguson's Perth Glory temporarily moved up to second place on the A-League table with a rousing 4-0 win over hapless Gold Coast United, while Sydney FC dropped out of the top six once again, a 5-2 loss to Newcastle exposing frailties at both ends of the field.

In the recent fixture contested by the two sides in Campbelltown, a late goal from Adam Hughes gave Perth a share of the points; since then, little has gone right for Sydney FC, but everything has gone Perth Glory's way. Their star-studded side has finally begun to click after their poor start to the season, the likes of Shane Smeltz, Travis Dodd and Liam Miller combining to excellent effect in recent weeks. Sydney FC, for their part, are still searching in vain for an effective striking partnership, and their defence is looking as vulnerable as it ever has.

Much will depend on the fitness



Sky Blues aim to halt inform Glory

Odds:
SFC 2.29
Draw 3.40
Glory 3.20

of Brett Emerton, who missed the loss against Newcastle with a niggling injury. He may well return for the clash against Perth, although he may not last the full ninety minutes. Emerton's replacement in midfield against the Jets, Hirofumi Moriyasu, at least scored a fine goal, but did not offer the sort of dynamism and movement that Emerton can provide at his best. The absence of Dimitri Petratos, on duty with the Olyroos, was sorely felt against the Jets. With

Mark Bridge looking out of sorts at the moment, Juho Makela singularly unimpressive in recent appearances and Bruno Cazarine only really suited to a target-man role, Vitezslav Lavicka must be sorely be tempted to bring the speedy Mitchell Mallia into the first eleven once more, to provide the sort of pace and enterprise that the fans have come to expect of Petratos.

Perth, for their part, have few such personnel problems, and have

rarely in their A-League history been riding such a wave of confidence. Four wins out of the last five, and four goals in their last outing, should see them heading into the game fully expecting to win. The SFS has, in fact, seen some fine performances from the Glory over the years, including an impressive 4-1 win late in the 2008/09 season. Ferguson will be hoping for a repeat on Saturday evening.

**Kiss of Death
SFC 2-1 Glory**



Glory Line Up

1. Danny Vukovic (Gk)
3. Bas Van Den Brink
4. Billy Mehmet
5. Steve Pantelidis
7. Jacob Burns (C)
8. Adam Hughes
9. Shane Smeltz
10. Liam Miller
13. Travis Dodd
14. Steven McGarry
15. Tommy Amphlett
18. Jesse Makarounas
19. Josh Risdon
20. Neil Young
21. Mile Sterjovski
27. Andrezinho
35. Dean Heffernan

In: 15. Tommy Amphlett (Promoted), 18. Jesse Makarounas (Promoted), 20. Neil Young (Returns From Injury)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: 2. Josh Mitchell (Knee), 6. Chris Coyne (Achilles), 11. Victor Sikora (Hip – Long Term Injury List), 12. Scott Neville (Knee), 16. Evan Berger (Hamstring), 17. Todd Howarth (Groin), 22. Adam Taggart (Qantas Australian U23 duty)



Phoenix Line Up

1. Mark Paston (GK)
3. Tony Lochhead
4. Brent Griffiths
6. Tim Brown
7. Leo Bertos
8. Paul Ifill
9. Chris Greenacre
11. Daniel
14. Mirjan Pavlovic
17. Vince Lia
18. Ben Sigmund
19. Jimmy Downey
20. Tony Warner (GK)
21. Dani Sanchez
22. Andrew Durante (C)
24. Alex Smith

In: Brent Griffiths (promoted), Mirjan Pavlovic (promoted)

Out: Manny Muscat (suspended – 1 match)

Unavailable: Manny Muscat (suspended), Cameron Lindsay (international duty), Lucas Pantelis (knee injury - indefinite), Nicky Ward (hamstring – one to two weeks)

Wellington Phoenix v Brisbane Roar

Sun 12 Feb Westpac Stadium 3:00pm

By Joe Gallagher

Last November, Wellington Phoenix were on the cusp of the wooden spoon. Ricki Herbert's men were largely tipped to finish last in the A-League. They had a crippling incompetence away from home and had slumped to back-to-back home defeats for only the third time in their existence.

Conversely, Brisbane Roar sat comfortably at the table's summit. They were champions of Australia and had just set a new national record with their 36 game undefeated streak.

Fast forward four months, the scenario is strikingly dissimilar. Wellington is second, Brisbane third. The Roar's unbeatable period is a distant memory, and before their win against league leaders Central Coast Mariners on the weekend, they had only won two of their last eleven games.

Meanwhile, the Phoenix have shattered their away hoodoo, with three wins across the ditch in a row under their belt. Bookies and punters either side of the Tasman now have them a very real possibility of making the grand final, if not winning it.

They are the league's form side ahead of the visit of the Roar this weekend. It is a testament to the character of Herbert's side that they were able to turn what was such a dire position – the collapse of previous owner Terry Serepisos added insult to an already extensive list of long-term injuries –



Roar the yardstick for Phoenix

Odds:
Phoenix 2.65
Draw 3.40
Roar 2.70

into a genuine surge towards the peak of the league.

It's unfamiliar territory for a side from New Zealand, but ahead of the clash on Sunday, they will be brimming with confidence. Three points against their nearest challengers would create daylight between a home finals' spot and the chasing pack.

The home side might also see out their first season unbeaten by the Roar – after drawing 1-1 in Queensland and defeating the champions 2-0 in Dunedin last year.

That win will be the template for Herbert. That night his tactics were outstanding. A similar performance would

almost certainly yield three points for Wellington – which simply has to be the minimum ahead of a very tough run-in to the finals.

They have a fit and in-form Paul Ifill in their lineup, after another sublime display in Adelaide. At the back, Andrew Durante and Ben Sigmund form one of the best defensive partnerships in the competition. The only forced change for Herbert will be the absence of Manny Muscat from his eleven after picking up a suspension in South Australia.

Brisbane will bring arguably the league's most lethal weapon in Besart Berisha – the Albanian notching yet another goal (his twelfth of the season)

in the 2-0 win in Gosford on Saturday. With stars Thomas Broich and Henrique back in the mix, Brisbane are beginning to look like the Roar of old, since their winning run and subsequent mid-season slump. Nothing would do better for Brisbane's title challenge than back-to-back wins against the league's top two. And so with second spot up for grabs,

Sunday pits the high-flying Phoenix against a resurgent Roar in what will likely be the match of the round – and possibly one which dictates the direction of the entire season for one of these clubs.

**Kiss of Death
Phoenix 1-0 Roar**



Roar Line Up

1. Michael Theoklitos (GK)
2. Matt Smith (C)
3. Shane Stefanutto
5. Ivan Franjic
6. Erik Paaratlu
7. Besart Berisha
8. Massimo Murodocca
10. Henrique
12. Matt Mundy
16. Mohamed Adnan
20. Andrew Redmayne (GK)
21. James Meyer
22. Thomas Broich
24. Nick Fitzgerald
25. George Lambadaridis

In: Nil

Out: Nil

Unavailable: 19. Jack Hingert (ankle injury - 1 week), 14. Rocky Visconte (Qantas Australian U23 duty), 4. Matt Jurman (Qantas Australian U23 duty), 17. Mitch Nichols (Qantas Australian U23 duty)

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Gold Coast Line Up

40.Chris O'Connor [gk]
2.Josh Brillante
3.Michael Thwaite (c)
5.Kristian Rees
7.Golgol Mebrahtu
11.Jake Barker-Daish
13.Ante Rozic
14.Ben Halloran
15.Adama Traore
16.Maceo Rigters
17.Chris Harold
18.James Brown
20.Jerrad Tyson [gk]
21.Daniel Severino
22.Peter Jungschlager
23.Dylan McGowan
24.Jonas Salley
28.Daniel Bowles
29.Mitch Bevan
30.Brendan White [gk]
four to be omitted

In: 2.Josh Brillante (promoted),
11.Jake Barker-Daish (promoted),
18.James Brown (return from ankle injury), 20.Jerrad Tyson [gk] (return from wrist injury), 28.Daniel Bowles (return from ankle injury)
Out: Nil
Unavailable: 1.Glen Moss (groin injury – 4 weeks), 6.Paul Beekmans (compassionate leave - indefinite), 9.Joel Porter (calf – 3 weeks), 10.Tahj Minniecon (foot injury – 1 week), 12.Dylan Macallister (hamstring – 5 weeks), 19.Chris Broadfoot (ankle injury – indefinite)

Gold Coast United v Adelaide United

Sun 12 Feb Skilled Park 5:30pm

By Jarrod Ellis

This Sunday Gold Coast United will play host to Adelaide United in a match that could have a significant bearing on the final destination of the 2011-2012 A-League Wooden Spoon.

Neither Gold Coast nor Adelaide have been in good form in recent weeks and this bottom of the ladder clash will be viewed as a must win for both clubs. A loss for Gold Coast would see them become increasingly isolated at the foot of the ladder, seven points behind their nearest rivals. Whilst for Adelaide they must win if they're to retain a realistic chance of making the finals this season.

Coming off another home defeat, a 2-1 loss to Wellington Phoenix, Adelaide look to have resettled into their early season form after a temporary revival under John Kosmina.

Nine games into his second tenure at the club, Kosmina has gradually become more settled in the role as each week has passed by but after a bright start, which saw the Reds take seven of a possible nine points in his first three games, the last fortnight in particular has been anything but a holiday.

Two home losses has the Reds facing an uphill battle with seven games remaining to be playing finals, but while Kosmina conceded last Friday's defeat to Wellington put



Odds:
GCUFC 2.27
Draw 3.40
AUFC 3.25

Six pointer at Skilled Park

another dent in United's top six aspirations, he has by no means written the season off.

"It makes it that little bit more difficult but it's far from over yet," Kosmina said of where the Reds sit in the context of their season following last Friday night's result.

"You've got to keep emphasising the good things. You've got to fix up the things that aren't so good as well but you just keep focusing on the positives, focusing on how we play, stick to that and it will turn around."

Without a win in their last six games Adelaide fans will know that despite

the season not being over just yet that the Reds will need to show significant improvement in the run-in to the finals if they're to qualify.

Gold Coast on the other hand will be motivated largely by the desire to avoid finishing at the foot of the ladder at season's end. Despite still being a mathematical chance of finishing in a finals place United would need to string together an impressive run of results to ensure such an eventuality.

The last time these two sides met Gold Coast ran out convincing 3-0 winners, a result that should give

Miron Bleiburg's side some confidence of taking the three points.

Ben Halloran scored two on that occasion and midweek he iterated his team's desire to seize the opportunity to potentially avoid the wooden spoon.

"Moving off the bottom is our first goal and Adelaide are the ones who are closest to us on the ladder, so we have to give everything on Sunday to get a result against them," he said.

**Kiss of Death
Gold Coast 2-2 AUFC**



Adelaide Utd Line Up

1.Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c)
2.Osama Malik
3.Nigel Boogaard
6.Cassio
7.Zenon Caravella
8.Evgeniy Levchenko
9.Sergio van Dijk
10.Dario Vidosic
11.Bruce Djite
12.Ricardo Da Silva
14.Cameron Watson
15.Jacob Melling
17.Iain Ramsay
18.Fabian Barbiero
21.Francisco Usucar
39.Nick Munro (gk)
*one to be omitted

In: Ricardo Da Silva (promoted), Nick Munro (gk) (promoted from NYL)

Out: Paul Izzo (gk) (knee)

Unavailable: Daniel Mullen (Qantas Australian U23 duty), Mark Birighitti (gk) (Qantas Australian U23 duty), Antony Golec (Qantas Australian U23 duty), Spase Dilevski (groin), Milan Susak (hamstring), Jon McKain (knee)

Melbourne derby reveals tale of two journeys



It was intense, forceful and at times an affair devoid of its pretty nature, conversely the scoreless draw in this season's third edition of the Melbourne derby illustrated the struggling constituents inundated around the rival clubs.

Whilst both outfits have experienced topsy-turvy campaigns, none were able to reap the bragging rights from last Saturday's contest. Melbourne Heart were by far the better side, seemingly overrunning its city-neighbour with relative ease in the opening period, before squandering quilt edge chances – most notably, Kristian Sarkies' blunder in the final minutes, where the former Victory midfielder skied the ball over the bar with only custodian Ante Covic to beat.

It leaves the red and whites on a seven-game winless streak, unable to conjure a win in 2012. Since Heart's 4-0 demolition of an out-of-sorts Sydney FC in late December, it has only scored a meagre five goals, aspiring to set back the time clock, where it reached the lofty heights of second on the ladder – winning all five fixtures in December, including the 3-2 triumph over its cross-town rival.

Despite a lapse in results, the red half of Melbourne hasn't displayed a tenuous brand of football, although it ostensibly lacks the killer instinct to finish off teams when the game has been in the balance. This was typified in the club's 1-0 loss to A-League pacesetter Central Coast Mariners on Janu-

ary 18 at AAMI Park. After controlling large proportions of the play, Heart fell victim to wasteful finishing and consequently conceded a late winner against the run of play.

Sidelined with injury, Brazilian maestro and club captain Fred has been an enormous loss to the club's midfield organisation and creativity. The playmaker's influence has been sorely missed, and while a high reliance on individual brilliance is no blueprint prescribed by any coach, John van't Schip will be eager to get his skipper back on the park this weekend – after training strongly during the week – against the sixth-placed Newcastle Jets at Ausgrid Stadium.

The absence of Heart's Olyroos trio provided a rare opportunity for young sensation Craig Goodwin to make his entrance onto the A-League scene. With customary left-back Aziz Behich away on national team duties, the youth team defender, signed from last year's Victorian Premier League Grand Finalist's Oakleigh Cannons, made a dream debut at senior level.

The 20-year-old didn't let the sense of occasion get the better of him, featuring prominently in defence, in addition to his blistering runs down the left flank when venturing forward. The South Australian almost capped off a memorable night with a searing strike outside the 18-yard box, however a spectacular save from Covic denied the youngster of a maiden A-League goal. If his inaugural A-League outing is anything to go by, then a bright future beckons for Heart's latest sensation.

By and large, Heart comprises the ingredients and depth to cause a few headaches in the finals series. Whilst their spot isn't assured – clinging on to fifth position with a hungry pack preceding it – players in the vein of Fred, Matthew Thompson and Mate Dugandzic will come back to strengthen



Crunch time arrives for both Melbourne teams as the season is poised to go one way or the other. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

their charge on a finals assault. Of the seven matches remaining, four are at home, in what will be a taxing project for the A-League's youngest club.

On the other hand, Melbourne Victory, appear weary and dysfunctional. A two-time A-League champion and three-time Asian Champions League representative, the navy blues set high-benchmarks in the foundational years of the A-League – consistently dominating its opposition on the pitch, while renowned for its stability off the playing field, it was a model that most clubs would attempted to emulate. Nowadays, the Vic-

tory that was so successful in so many ways looks to be a fading light glimmering in the distance – from a non-fiscal perspective.

This campaign has reached little heights, with an abundance of potential not living up to expectations. Melbourne, while victory in name, hasn't possessed a winning formula, triumphant on only four occasions from 20 matches this season – a paltry return for a team which has the allure of Australia's most decorated footballer in Harry Kewell.

With a legion of experience on the playing cards, it is the lack of mobility and coherence within the team that has made this outfit a

sick version of its former self.

The acquisition of Covic, 36, has been a revelation between the posts – more often than not saving the team's blushes – although it has become increasingly evident that an injection of fresh blood is required for this club to prosper.

Football is a game of evolution – from technical standards to supporters' rights – and it's up to coaches and the supporting staff to keep in tact with the times. Currently, Victory has held on to its old cattle for far too long, and unfortunately for them, it is paying the price.

While it's never an easy task to dispose of players that have previously won the club high accolades, it is a necessary duty in the modern football era. Several players are beyond 30 years of age – eight in total – and unfortunately for some of them, it will likely be their last hurrah in the Victory colours. A rebuilding process will come into fruition, despite the outcome of the team's push to participate in the play-offs.

Whilst Victory has one of the more experienced squads in the competition, it would be folly to solely lame the blame on ageing warriors – given the talent still at the club's disposal.

Confidence seems scarce throughout the team, and mentally, the players appear fragile when defending a lead – on eight occasions this term, Victory has yielded an advantage to not come away with the three points.

The team may be down on morale; however the midfield's lack of imagination is certainly a major problem. The combination of Leigh Broxham and Grant Brebner – holding midfielders – doesn't allow the side to penetrate its opposition with vigour, and noticeably leaves the corridor depleted without any real transition from defence to attack. With playmaker Carlos Hernandez outwardly out of favour and form, the Costa Rican hasn't been able to provide the impetus he habitually offers. His skill and natural talent have been elements Victory has grown accustomed to over the past few seasons.

Friday night's meeting with the Mariners will be a stern assignment for Victory, and despite its underwhelming season to date, it can take confidence knowing it is still unbeaten on its home turf and within reach of a top-six berth – three points adrift of the Jets.

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Stubbins can escape Thai Police



PHIL Stubbins flew to Thailand yesterday (Thursday) to start a two-year deal as head coach of Premier League club Insee Police United.

His contract is for one-year with a one-year option but it contains a get-out clause enabling him to take up any attractive offer that comes his way during that time.

"At the end of the day it would be nice to get an offer from an A-League club that had confidence to give me a call," Stubbins told me earlier this week.

"Is that pie in the sky stuff? It's difficult to say.

"Jobs in the A-League are very limited and it's difficult to open doors in that competition.

"I believe that they should be giving more opportunities to Australian coaches because local coaches are at the forefront of success in the A-League. You only have to look at Ange (Postecoglou) and Arnie (Graham Arnold)."

The key to Stubbins' link to Insee Police United was former Adelaide United fitness and conditioning expert Andrew Young.

Stubbins and Young formed an allegiance at Adelaide prior to Rini Coolen's arrival in July 2010.

Young quit Adelaide the following month and has since worked as a consultant with Police United.

Young and the club hierarchy came to Australia last year to look at the A-League set-up and also went to the AIS where Stubbins gave a presentation.

The Thai club's bosses were extremely impressed and when they discovered that Stubbins, who holds an AFC Pro Licence, had recently been left in limbo after failing to win the combined AIS/Joey's coaching role they made him an offer which he quickly accepted.

Police United have been one of the Thai Premier League's yoyo clubs for over a decade now, bouncing back from relegation on three occasions since the late 1990s.

Last season the club finished ninth in the 18-team TPL, a massive 41 points behind runaway league champion Buriram PEA, who went on to clinch a historic domestic treble by also claiming the Thai FA Cup and Toyota League Cup.

"Insee is a very stable club and it's big on youth development," said Stubbins.

"They've won the past two youth league titles but they want to do something with the Premier League side next season and try to finish in the top four or five."

Stubbins' background at club and AIS level provided the perfect mix for the Thais.

The man from Hull had a successful playing career in Europe, Japan and Australia. His coaching career proved just as successful with Whittlesea, Heidelberg and Richmond in Victoria before being named assistant coach at Adelaide United where he worked under Aurelio Vidmar and Coolen. The 2005 Victorian Coach of the Year left Adelaide United last March and has been working at the AIS and coaching its national youth league side.

He said goodbye to the AIS youngsters late last week and reflected positively on his Canberra experience.

"My time there was very advantageous to me and it enriched me as a coach.

"I said goodbye to the group last Thursday and it was an emotional time because I have a great association with them.

"This is probably the youngest group we've ever had at the AIS now with all these 15- and 16-year-olds.

"I've worked with these kids for nine months on and off and you get attached to them. You're there for them in lots of many ways, which makes it so much different from a club job. You're a mentor to these youngsters."

Stubbins also has worked with the Young Socceroos, who are out to qualify for the 2013 World Under-20 finals in Turkey and he holds them in high regard.

"Judged on just the bottom line of talent alone this current crop is a very, very talented group. I've always maintained that for a group to go far then best practices have to be in place and a lot will depend on their preparation."

But all that is in the past now as Stubbins prepares to hit the ground running in his new role in Asia.

The big guns of the TPL are Buriram, Chonburi and cashed up Muang Thong United who showed their ambition by signing Robbie Fowler last year.

But as Stubbins throws himself headlong into his new coaching role in a foreign land don't be surprised if his



Phill Stubbins gives instructions to Andwele Slory, as Adelaide United assistant coach last season. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

name crops up in private discussions among A-League club powerbrokers over the next few weeks.

Don't forget that Stubbins and Sydney FC football director Gary Cole have a strong professional and personal link at a time when the hunt is well and truly on to replace outgoing coach Vitezslav Lavicka.

And there are people at Adelaide United who rue the day Stubbins departed for the AIS. With talk that John Kosmina could move into a football director's role next season that opens up the opportunity for those Stubbins' supporters to plead his case.

So while Stubbins for the moment has been lost from the Australian football scene I'm willing to bet that his self-imposed exile will not last too long.

Super League kicks off
A 10-TEAM Country Super League featuring clubs from Victoria's Goulburn area and the Griffith region in NSW will be launched next month.

The elite regional competition is the brainchild of FFV zone representatives Frank Trimboli and Jim Kalafatis and will be administered by the Goulburn North East Football Association. "Our aim is to produce an amateur competition delivered in a professional way," said Trimboli.

GNEFA will produce a comprehensive marketing plan as well as a media and community relations plan for the CSL and this year there will be a

\$3000 membership fee per team.

The development plan for the competition aims to introduce a senior women's league next year and a youth league in 2014.

Late last year the GNEFA in conjunction with the Griffith and District Amateur Football Association released guidelines and application forms for clubs wishing to compete in the new competition.

The league will consist of three sides from Shepparton, two from Cobram, one from Tatura and four from Griffith and the founder members will be Shepparton, Shepparton United, Shepparton South, Cobram Tigers, Cobram Victory, Tatura, Hanwood FC, Yoogali FC, Yoogali SC and West Griffith.

While Cobram Victory's giant-killing run in last year's Mirabella Cup attracted a lot of publicity south of the Murray, central Riverina outfit Hanwood FC had probably the best season in its 56-year history by going through its campaign undefeated and clinching the grand final with a hard-fought 1-0 win over Wests.

It's expected that Hanwood will be the main flag bearer for NSW in the CSL. For the upcoming season all CSL clubs will be limited to registering a maximum of 25 players and a minimum of seven players per squad must be under 21.

Each CSL club must continue to field a senior team in 2012 under the auspices of their respective football as-



Sean (left) and Michael Ellis pictured on the front page of the 26 January issue of The Oban Times.



sociations.

And just in case you thought that regional football associations turn a blind eye to the user pays principle think again.

One of the highlights of the new CSL season will be a Gold Medal Dinner acknowledging the achievements of clubs, players, coaches and referees. Each CSL club will be forced to buy a minimum number of 25 tickets for this end-of-season function.

On a more serious note, let's hope that this ambitious project gains a foothold in the respective regions and brings with it a level of competition that attracts both the attention of locals and the broad football community.

Highlanders for Tigers
COUSINS Sean and Michael Ellis fly out of Scotland today to join ambitious Cobram Tigers in the newly created 2012 Country Super League.

Spare a thought for the 22-year-old Lochaber lads who were due to play their final game this season for Fort William against Fraserburgh in the Press & Journal Highland League last weekend.

The game was postponed as the pitch at Claggan Park was frozen and this weekend they'll experience a near 40-degree Celsius turnaround when they arrive in northern Victoria. Sean Ellis is a former Inverness Caley Thistle and Ross County youth

player and the striker has been starring at Fort William, a team that is a perennial struggler and has never finished higher than 11th since joining the Highland League in 1983.

"Sean is without question one of the most talented players in the league - he is a match winner on his own. Along with Michael we are losing two of our more experienced players so it's certainly a blow," said Fort manager Danny Conlon.

The Ellis cousins had planned to come to Australia later this year but former Fort William player Stuart Vance, a leading striker with Cobram Tigers, fast-forwarded the deal to get them out here before the start of the 2012 season.

"Stuart has set most of this up for us," said Sean Ellis. "He's sorted us with jobs and a place to stay."

The timing of the cousins' arrival couldn't be better as striker Grant Davidson has returned to Yoogali FC after playing with the Tigers last season.

And it's not just on the field that the Highland duo will see plenty of action.

Cobram Tigers celebrate their 60th anniversary this year and a host of functions are planned to celebrate the landmark event.

Belated credit: In last week's GW the picture of Melbourne Victory NYL coach Darren Davies was taken by photographer Zee Ko.

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PHOTOS/GRAPHICS: ANITA MILAS

Transfer merry-go-round for Aussie Stars

By Damian Davies

Since my last report at the end of November, the action on the pitch was been a little slower as the European winter break is taken and several of the big Asian leagues had finished the season. However with the transfer window open, and the some lesser known Asian leagues kicking off, plenty of transfer activity.

Transfers :- Great to see some very positive transfers occurring, none moreso than three young Aussies transferring to the EPL. Players have moved around a lot in Europe, with our first players now in Austria after that market has been lacking an Aussie presence for a few years. Also "new" on the map is Thailand, and the number of players calling Korea home has surged to eight. With the leagues in Indonesia having now resumed, plenty of player movement there.

Additions/changes to database:-
Scott Baginski (28 Feb 1983) - transferred to Air Force United, Thailand
Nedim Basic (3 Sep 1993) - transferred to Wuppertaler SV Borussia, Germany
Eddy Bosnar (29 Apr 1980) - transferred to Suwon Bluewings, Korea
Kerem Bulut (2 Mar 1992) - transferred to Eskisehirspor, Turkey
Nathan Burns (7 May 1988) - transferred to Incheon United, Korea
Richie Cardozo (28 Mar 1986) - transferred to LASK Linz, Austria
Aaron Downes (15 May 1985) - loan to Bristol Rovers, England
Dean Evans (7 May 1990) - transferred to Sham Shui Po, Hong Kong
Giancarlo Gallifuoco (12/11/94) - transferred to Tottenham, England
Scott Gannon (12 Mar 1988) - transferred to Amicale FC, Vanuatu (O-League)
Ran Gazet du Chattelier (17 Feb 1991) - transferred to Stuttgart Kickers II, Germany
Andreas Govas (21 Jul 1989) - transferred to Troyes, France
Joel Griffiths (21 Aug 1979) - transferred to Shanghai Shenhua, China
Steve Hesketh (15 Dec 1988) - transferred to Tottenham, England
James Holland (15 May 1989) - transferred to Austria Wien, Austria
Danny Invincible (31 Mar 1979) - transferred to Army United, Thailand
Josip Konyit (29 Apr 1992) - transferred to NK Vrapce, Croatia
Steven Lustica (12 Apr 1991) - loaned to NK Dugopolje, Croatia
Josh Maguire (22 Sep 1980) - transferred to Bontang FC, Indonesia
Matthew Mayora (10 Mar 1986) - transferred to Shillong Latong, India
Srecko Mitrovic (19 Feb 1984) - transferred to Shenzhen Ruby, China
Jade North (7 Jan 1982) - transferred to Consadole Sapporo, Japan
Matthew Park (22 Apr 1988) - loan return to Hearts, Scotland
Andy Rose (13 Feb 1990) - trans-



Simon Storey: released from India



Nathan Burns: moves to Korea



Richie Cardozo: heads to Austria



Josh Kennedy: 2nd Golden Boot

ferred to Sounders FC, USA
Naum Sekulovski (14 May 1982) - transferred to Persema Malang, Indonesia
Peter Skapetis (13 Jan 1995) - transferred to Queens Park Rangers, England
Robert Stambolziev (26 Oct 1990) - transferred to AO Thrasylvoulos Fylis, Greece
Goran Subara (4 Apr 1987) - transferred to Balestier Khalsa, Singapore
Aleks Vrteski (28 Sep 1988) - transferred to Persija Jakarta, Indonesia
Ryan Williams (28 Oct 1993) - transferred to Fulham, England
Ricky Zucco (2 Sep 1990) - transferred to Team Wellington, New Zealand

Removed from database:-
Fred Agius (2 Feb 1984) - released from Cendrawasih FC, Indonesia
Julius Doe Davies (4 Sep 1994) - transferred to Melbourne Victory
Dean Heffernan (19 May 1980) - transferred to Perth Glory
Daniel Leach (1 May 1986) - retired from football
Doug Lindberg (27 Mar 1988) - transferred to Sleaford Town, England (non-league)
Andrew Maclean (TBC) - released from Hamilton Academicals, Scotland
Mark McGough (14 Mar 1988) - released from Balestier Khalsa, Singapore
David Micevski (25 Feb 1986) - released from Solo FC, Indonesia
Simon Storey (5 June 1982) - released from Mohun Bagan, India
Daniel Wilkinson (TBC) - released from Cendrawasih FC, Indonesia

Club Level:-
England (Premier League) – The best performing Aussie recently is **Tim Cahill**. He has managed to break his season duck and Everton have climbed to tenth. He has not set the world on fire, but **Schwarzer**, **Grella** and **Herd** are all in the medical rooms. Fulham and Villa have been inconsistent, while Blackburn sit in the bottom three after an average festive season.

England (Championship) – the results have not been that great for Middlesbrough of late, but **Scott McDonald** certainly found his scoring boots. He managed to add another 5 goals to his scoring tally over the past months but has suffered an untimely injury. Also performing well is team mate **Rhys Williams**. Rumoured to be a big dollar target over January, he has stayed with Boro. Importantly he has made 28 appearances so far this term, suggesting his injuries are behind him. Another hoping to put injury behind him is **Richie Garcia**. He has returned to a Hull City team that sits just outside the playoffs, but he is yet to be restored to the starting eleven. **Adam Federici** has been reliable yet again as Reading have pushed up the table, while **Mike Jedinak**'s Crystal Palace are going in the opposite direction. Both **Neil Kilkeny** (Bristol City) and **Shane Lowry** (Millwall) find themselves just out of the relegation places but will be hoping for some quick points to avoid a tense end to the season.

England (League One) – from an Aussie perspective, all about **Cisak**, **Wesolowski** and **Bouzanis** at Oldham Athletic. Unfortunately, another up and down month now sees the boys in the bottom half of the table, but a congested bunch mid table means they can climb quickly with the games they have in hand.

England (League Two) – Shrewsbury Town (**Shane Cansdell-Sheriff**) remain in the hunt for automatic promotion, while the loan deal for **Aaron Downes** (Bristol Rovers) seems to be paying dividends with the team climbing clear of the relegation spots.

Italy (Serie B) – the top three teams are fighting out a great battle for the two automatic promotion places. **Carl Valeri**'s Sassuolo currently are second, however every win matters at this stage.

Italy (Serie C2) – four straight wins for FC Catanzaro (**Christian Esposito**) has seen them push

into the playoff positions and still a reasonable chance of automatic promotion. Christian continues in the starting eleven.

Germany (Bundesliga) – A rare recent start for **Mitch Langerak** in a Dortmund side that are flirting with the league lead. A fantastic month for Monchengladbach (**Leckie**) as they have climbed to within reach of a Champions League place. Hertha Berlin have had a very poor few months and have dropped into relegation danger. **Nikita Rukavytsya** is just returning from an injury break.

Germany (2. Bundesliga) – Fortuna Dusseldorf have certainly got the shakes at the top of the table. **Robbie Kruse** has not featured much recently, would be great to see him play a role in the chase for promotion.

Netherlands (Eredivisie) – AZ certainly do have the shakes, letting the league lead slip. **Brett Holman** has been the centre of transfer speculation in January, but now nothing has come of that, hopefully he can lead his team to the title in Holland. FC Utrecht have not been in sparkling form but fortunately the teams below them are not putting any pressure on them. The three Aussies (**Oar**, **Zullo**, **Sarota**) are predominately used from the bench at the moment.

Scotland (Premier) – the story from an Aussie perspective is all about **Ryan McGowan**. He is back in the starting eleven, scored his first senior goal and helped Hearts climb to fourth on the table. **Aaron Mooy** (St. Mirren) is getting limited minutes after an injury interrupted early season, but **Matt McKay** is still to get a look in at Rangers. Who have slipped behind fierce rivals Celtic in the race for the league title.

Scotland (Second division) – Arbroath still sit just behind Cowdenbeath as they chase automatic promotion. **Beau Busch** has now played over a 1000 minutes this campaign.

Greece (Super League) – PAOK have moved to third on the table, however **Apostolis Giannou** is yet to make a huge impact, coming on as a substitute in all his appearances.

Greece (Football League) – **Robert Stambolziev** scored in his debut after coming off the bench. Thrasylvoulos have certainly had a good month, but many more points will be needed to avoid relegation.

Greece (Football League Two) - Paniliakos now led the league comfortably with young **Christos Tomaras** making a significant contribution.

Turkey (Super Lig) – After putting a pay dispute behind him, **James Troisi** has hit a bit of a purple patch in terms of scoring as Kayserispor climb the table.

Portugal (Liga de Honra) – After an amazing start to the season, Atletico CP (**Caleb Patterson-Sewell**) have come back to earth. Nothing more evident of this than a recent 5-0 lost to new leaders, Estoril.

Switzerland (Super League) – now back on top of the table, Basel are on winter break but **Scott Chipperfield** has returned to the starting line up.

Wales (Preimer League) - entering the second half of the season, Bala Town (**Mark Pullman**) find themselves in the Championship group.

Japan (J League) – the competition came to a close in December with Nagoya Grampus finishing second after a slow start, just a point shy of Kashima Reysol. **Josh Kennedy** claimed his second Golden Boot in successive seasons. Our Aussies have had great seasons.
Josh Kennedy - 2790 minutes, 19 goals
Eddy Bosnar - 2835 minutes, 5 goals (transferred to Korea)
Alex Brosque - 2556 minutes, 7 goals
Matt Spiranovic - 2080 minutes, 0

goals

Japan (J2 League) – FC Tokyo (**Jade North**) won the title and promotion. Not sure if we will have an Aussies in J2 next season.
Jade North - 250 minutes, 0 goals
Mark Milligan - 2517 minutes, 1 goal

U.A.E. (UFL) – Al Nasr have been the big movers on late, led by none other than **Mark Bresciano**. He has played every minute of his ten starts, and managed to scored seven goals at the same time. From memory he was taking time out for the national team, not retiring. Will see if his name pops up in the next few months. The older boys obviously like the conditions as **Lucas Neill** has also played every minute in his 12 starts and scored three goals in the process.

India (I-League) – **Tolgay Olzbey** (East Begal) has contributed nine goals as his team now sit third on the table. Close behind is **Daniel Zelleny**'s Mohun Bagan.

Hong Kong (HKFA 1st) - having just resumed after Chinese New Year, **Karl Dodd**'s TSW Pegasus are running second. Not so successful for Sun Hei (**Milovanovic**), Tuen Huen (**Vekic**) or Sham Shui Po (**Evans**) who are all in the bottom half of the table.

New Zealand (Premiership) – still leading the Golden Boot is Aussie **George Slefendorfas** (Canterbury United) as his side closes in on Auckland City.

Injuries:- As teams return for a mid season break for many, will be interesting to see who has managed to shake off injury. Recent additions to the walking wounded are **Patrick Kisorbo** (knee), **Scott McDonald** (knee), **Mark Schwarzer** (back), **Chris Herd** (ankle), **Bradden Inman** (knee) and **Matthew Park** (knee). The casualties are mounting.

Club Competitions:-
Europe (UEFA Champions League) **Scott Chipperfield** (Basel) has progressed, while **Mitchell Langerak** (Dortmund) was eliminated.
(UEFA Europa League) **Brett Holman** (AZ) has progressed, while **Mark Schwarzer** was eliminated.

Asia (AFC Champions League) No fixtures.

(AFC Cup) No fixtures.

Youth:- Fairly quite as most youth leagues took a break over Christmas/New Year. Reece Cairra featured recently in the "NextGen Series".

National level :- No fixtures to report, but plenty coming up!!

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Victory defeat Heart in The Youth Derby



James Riccobene (Victory) gets the better of this clash with Adrian Zahra (Heart). PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON



Captains clash ... Dusan Bosnjak (Heart) holds off James Jeggo (Victory). Josh Groenewald follows the action. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

By Daniel Quinn

Victory defeat Heart in The Youth Derby

Melbourne Victory have defeated Melbourne Heart 2-1 in The Youth Derby at Kingston Heath on Sunday to win their third win of the season and their second consecutive win.

Victory started off at a high tempo with Luke O'Dea making a great run before passing to overage player Tommy Pondeljak but the 36-year-old fired over.

But Pondeljak made up from that miss with the opening goal on 16 minutes. James Riccobene put in a great cross which Pondeljak got on the end of before finishing past Heart 'keeper Nikola Roganovic.

But seven minutes later Heart equalised thanks to Adrian Zahra. After a good team move the wide man finished off with an off balance left footed finish.

Soon later Hernan Espindola cut in from the left before shooting but Roganovic saved comfortably.

Nine minutes before half-time Riccobene crossed brilliantly once again which was ran onto the end by Pondeljak but unlike the opening goal it was shot wide.

Just before the break senior registered David Williams tested Tando Velaphi with a good effort but the 24-year-old saved at the near post.

Half-time substitute Chris Cristaldo almost made an immediate impact but after his great run the 17-year-old's shot sailed into the stands.

But on 70 minutes Cristaldo did get the well deserved goal to give Victory the lead. John Buceto crossed fantastically to an onrushing Cristaldo who finished past Roganovic.

Heart's chances of scoring an equaliser were damped when Josh Groenewald was sent off for a second yellow card for a nasty challenge on Luc Jeggo.

Victory fans and staff despite in front were frustrated with the poor refereeing by Brenton Hayward, Patrick Chaplin and Bradley Ower who gave offsidess to runs which were clearing on.

With one minute left Jimmy Jeggo's corner was headed down by O'Dea but Roganovic saved easily to keep the scoreline the same.

Seconds later O'Dea should have scored to finish it off but he missed an open goal after Cristaldo decided to pass off while one-on-one with Roganovic.

Melbourne Victory coach Darren Davies despite the win thought his side could have performed better but there were tough conditions. "Just like when we were losing games, it's the same when we are winning games. It's about how we play and I actually thought that we didn't play as a good as we could this week and there were a number of factors for that

like the wind, the rain, the hail so we can certainly improve performance wise."

Mariners stay top of NYL ladder Central Coast Mariners have kept top spot on the NYL ladder with a 2-0 victory over Brisbane Roar at Pluim Park on Friday night.

A game with many chances had its first on 12 minutes when Andrew Redmayne denied Mariners' forward Kwabena Appiah-Kubi.

Roar's first chance came five minutes later when Luke Brattan fired over Dylan Mitchell's net.

On 34 minutes Mitchell Duke opened the scoring for the hosts as he pounced on a Redmayne mistake to slot home.

In the second-half Tomislav Cirkic and Matthew Thurtell were both denied by Mitchell with some great saves before Justin Hayward at the other end put his effort wide.

Substitute 'keeper Matt Acton then denied Brad Porter's stunning effort on 66 minutes.

Duke finished off the game in stoppage time with a powerful drive after Jordan Farina played in the impressive forward.

All square between Sky Blues and Jets

Sydney and Newcastle Jets have finished 1-1 on Sunday at WIN Jubilee Stadium in a hard-fought game.

The visitors started off the best with the opening goal on 6 minutes. Mark Jesic received the ball with back to goal and they turned before finished brilliantly into the top corner.

Sydney failed to create any clear chances in the first-half but just before the break Sydney 'keeper Ryan Norval saved well to deny Kyle Bradbery.

Two minutes into the second-half Mitch Mallia tested Jack Duncan for the first time of the afternoon with a drive from distance but the 'keeper won that encounter.

Jacob Pepper and Dino Fajkovic both went close for the visitors but neither could score.

Mallia thought he scored midway through the half but after went through Duncan Sam Galloway was there to clear.

With not long left Fajkovic hit the crossbar with a header after jumping over the advancing Norval and that came to bite the Jets on the behind as Mallia equalised with three minutes left.

Baby Reds thump Australia's best Adelaide United has thumped Australia's best youngsters the AIS 5-1 at Burton Park on Saturday to pull further apart from the bottom two.

Adelaide opened the scoring in the second minute as Evan Kostopoulos finished from an acute angle.

Only a minutes later Stefan Mauk should

have equalised after beating 'keeper John Hall but kissed the post.

On 8 minutes Ricardo Da Silva made it 2-0 with a great free-kick from the edge of the box.

Da Silva on the edge of the break should have scored his brace but smacked the upright.

Just after the break Kenyan Awer Mabil made it 3-0 after being substituted 90 seconds before. He used his pace to get into the box before finishing past AIS 'keeper Andre Jannese.

Jannese was at fault for the fourth as he gave possession away to Kostopoulos to claim his brace with an open net.

AIS did pull one goal back thanks to Mauk who squeezed one past substitute 'keeper Paul Izzo.

But Nicholas Mavromatis made it 5-1 to cap off a great win as he finished past Jannese.

Gold Coast ease past Glory Gold Coast United have defeated Perth Glory 3-1 at Owen Park on Saturday to move closer to the second placed Perth Glory.

Perth had the first chance with Ndumba Makeche on two minutes whose effort was denied by Jerrad Tyson.

Impressive youngster Mitch Cooper created the hosts first chance but poked wide on 8 minutes.

But Cooper opened the scoring 10 min-

Results	
CC Mariners	2-0 Brisbane Roar
Adelaide United	5-1 AIS
Gold Coast United	3-1 Perth Glory
Sydney FC	1-1 Newcastle Jets
Melbourne Victory	2-1 Melbourne Heart

NYL Standings	
	P W D L F A D P
1 CC Mariners	15 10 14 35 13 22 31
2 Perth Glory	14 7 5 2 31 25 6 26
3 Gold Coast United	14 7 2 5 30 24 6 23
4 Brisbane Roar	14 6 4 4 33 28 5 22
5 Newcastle Jets	14 6 4 4 24 23 1 22
6 Melbourne Heart	15 6 1 8 27 34 -7 19
7 Sydney FC	14 5 3 6 34 24 10 18
8 Adelaide United	14 4 4 6 20 27 -7 16
9 AIS	14 4 1 9 23 39 -16 13
10 Melbourne Victory	14 3 11 0 13 32 -19 10

Next Round	
Fri 10 Feb 12 5:00pm	Newcastle Jets Vs Gold Coast United Adamstown Oval, Newcastle
Sat 11 Feb 12 3:00pm	Melbourne Victory Vs Central Coast Mariners Kingston Heath, Cheltenham
Sat 11 Feb 12 4:00pm	AIS Vs Brisbane Roar AIS Athletics Track, Canberra
Sat 11 Feb 12 5:00pm	Sydney FC 5-2 Perth Glory Sydney Football Stadium
Sun 12 Feb 12 3:00pm	Melbourne Heart Vs Adelaide United John Cain Memorial Park, Thornbury

utes later with a great lobbed finish over Tyson after a great Sami Tesfagabr cross. Just before the break Tesfagabr impressed further when he scored from close range after Elliot Ronto's attempt was saved by Tyson. On 66 minutes Glory's day got worse when skipper Sam Mitchinson was given a straight red card for a thoughtless challenge on Bobby Russell. With less than 10 minutes left Harry O'Brien scored off a corner but Russell finished Glory off in stoppage time with a tap in from a few yards out.

Greater Geelong Cup

Nth Geelong overwhelm Geelong in Cup opener

By Roy Hay

First Division club North Geelong overwhelmed local rivals Geelong by four goals to nil in the opening match of the 2012 City of Greater Geelong Cup at Bell Park Sports Club last Friday night.

On a balmy evening with a light breeze to keep the temperature down, North put pressure on the Geelong midfield and defence from the start.

As a consequence the Geelong attackers skipper Michael Nikolovski and Darko Lekovski were isolated for long periods, though the latter tested North keeper David Zilic in the third minute.

North were sharp on the flanks with Robbie Zadworny showing no signs of the injury that sidelined him for much of last season.

Aaron D'Antino had a shot saved by Geelong's Romeo Purlija after six minute, but North got the breakthrough in the tenth.

A series of shots were blocked by the Geelong backline but Reha Kurul's third effort flew into the net.

North took control thereafter with Geelong occasionally making break-away attacks but there was no further score in the first half.

After the break Zadworny came in from the left and squared the ball into the path of the onrushing Damien Morrell who thundered it past Purlija in the 44th minute.

Eight minutes later the attack switched to the right and this time Nathan Long finished the move neatly.

Finally Michael Anderson won the ball in midfield and ran through a tiring Geelong backline to complete the scoring in the 62nd minute.

Both sides rotated their players and the game finished with North looking once again like the favourite to lift the trophy.

Corio beat Surfcoast two-nil and Bell Park came from behind to beat Geelong Rangers two-one in City of Greater Geelong Cup matches at Bell Park Sports Club on Sunday evening.

There was a fierce, blustery wind throughout which made ball control difficult and all four teams had a number of new players who were finding their way into the local game.

Corio had the only goal of the first half in its match with Surfcoast when Andrew Palmieri got on the end of a break and beat keeper Sam Versace though the youngster got a hand to the ball but could not keep it out.

That was in the 24th minute.

It was not till the last six minutes that Corio settled the match with a second goal when Vedran Stojanovic's thunderous drive gave replacement keeper Barry Schroeter no chance.

Earlier Surfcoast should have scored at least a couple of goals when Jack Taylor and Billy Bunce had great chances. Bunce missed an open goal with the keeper nowhere and had another one on one which he wasted.

Corio coach Robbie Noggler was pleased that his side kept playing the ball out from the back even in the difficult conditions.

Jason Pickles said that Surfcoast were trying to bring in some new and younger players to see how they would match up against Corio, which he thought would be the benchmark for their Provisional League season. In the second game Geelong Rangers scored late in the first half.

New English import Andrew Husband came through the midfield and set up James Blackburn for a cool finish.

Rangers will rue a series of missed chances in the first half and Bell Park kept plugging away and were eventually rewarded when Ifeanyi Jagana-cho found himself in the clear and kept his head to bring Park level in

the 42nd minute.

Two minutes later Park was ahead as Eric Lawrence, a second half substitute, beat a couple of men on the bye line and then squeezed the ball into the net from a very acute angle.

No wonder his team-mates mobbed him for that effort.

Tonight (Friday) Geelong plays Surfcoast and North Geelong takes on the host club, while on Sunday it is Corio versus Bell Park and North Geelong against Geelong Rangers.



North Geelong (in red) versus Geelong in the CoGG Cup. Photo: Roy Hay.



Action from Corio (in green and white) versus Surfcoast in the CoGG Cup. Photo: Roy Hay.

Couch Potato

* ALL TIMES ARE AEDT



SBS ONE
Sunday February 12th
10:30 AM FIFA World Cup 2014 Magazine
11:00 AM Les Murray's Football Feature - Highlights of 2012 Africa Cup of Nations: Semi-finals
12:00 PM UEFA Champions League Magazine Program

Monday February 13th
05:45 AM Africa Cup of Nations Final - Live from the Stade d'Angondjé, Libreville, Gabon.

04:30 PM FIFA Futbol Mundial
11:05 PM The World Game

Wednesday February 15th
06:30 AM UEFA Champions League - Bayer Leverkusen v Barcelona. Live (1st Leg).

Thursday February 16th
06:30 AM UEFA Champions League - Zenit St Petersburg v Benfica. Live (1st Leg).

Friday February 17th
06:45 AM UEFA Europa League - Porto v Manchester City. Live (1st Leg).

SBS TWO
Monday February 13th
09:30 PM The World Game



Saturday 11-Feb
Bundesliga Round 21 Wolfsburg v Freiburg 6:25am LIVE
Primera Division Round 1 Boca Juniors v Olimpio 11:10am LIVE
SPL Round 26 Dunfermline v Rangers 10:55pm LIVE

Sunday 12-Feb
Bundesliga Round 21 Monchengladbach v Schalke 4:25am LIVE
Ligue 1 Round 23 Rennes v Sochaux 6:45am LIVE
Ligue 1 Round 23 Lyon v Caen 9:00am 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 21 NAC Breda v Ajax 10:45am 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 21 Twente v Heracles 4:00pm 1st Airing

Monday 13-Feb
Bundesliga Round 21 Augsburg v Nuremberg 1:25am LIVE
Bundesliga Round 21 Cologne v Hamburg 3:25am LIVE
Ligue 1 Round 23 Toulouse v St Etienne 6:45am LIVE
Primera Division Round 1 Racing v Tigre 9:00am LIVE
Ligue 1 Round 23 Lille v Bordeaux 12:00pm 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 21 PSV v De Graafschap 1:45pm 1st Airing

Thursday 16-Feb
Scottish Cup Round 5 Replay Teams TBC 6:40am LIVE
Copa Libertadores 2nd Stage Deportivo Tachira v Corinthians 10:55am LIVE

Friday 10th February
02:35 am Serie A Napoli V Milan
04:35 am The Serie A Highlights Show
05:05 am FA Cup Classics Liverpool V West Ham United Final 05/06
06:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights

Saturday 11th February
02:35 am Liverpool V Tottenham Hotspur
10:00 am The Serie A Highlights Show
10:30 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights

Sunday 12th February
12:30 am Serie A Udinese V Fiorentina
03:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights Show
06:00 am Serie A Napoli V Milan
08:00 am The Serie A Highlights

Monday 13th February
05:00 am Magic Of The FA Cup West Ham United - Greatest Goals
06:00 am Serie A Udinese V Fiorentina
08:00 am Liverpool V Tottenham Hotspur

Tuesday 14th February
06:00 am Bundesliga Bayer Leverkusen V Stuttgart
08:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights

Wednesday 15th February
02:30 am Sunderland V Arsenal
05:30 am FA Cup Classics Arsenal V Tottenham Hotspur Semi Final 00/01
06:00 am Serie A Milan V Udinese

Thursday 16th February
02:00 am The Serie A Highlights Show
02:30 am Bundesliga Borussia Dortmund V Bayer Leverkusen
04:30 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights
05:30 am FA Cup Classics Manchester United V Middlesbrough 4th Round 04/05



ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE LIVE
Times listed are 7 minutes prior to kick-offs.

Week 27
Sat Feb 11 Man U v Liverpool 11.30 pm Fox 1
Sun Feb 12 Everton v Chelsea 1.53 am Fox 1
Sun Feb 12 Sunderland v Arsenal 1.53 am Fox 2
Sun Feb 12 Blackburn v QPR 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Feb 12 Bolton v Wigan 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Feb 12 Fulham v Stoke 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Feb 12 Swansea v Norwich 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Feb 12 T'ham v Newcastle 4.23 am Fox 1
Mon Feb 13 Wolves v West Brom 12.23 am Fox 1
Mon Feb 13 Aston Villa v Man C 2.53 am Fox 1

ENGLISH FOOTBAL LEAGUE
Sun Feb 12 FLC: Blackpool v Portsmouth 4.00 am Fox 2
Tue Feb 14 L2: Gillingham v Southend 6.30 am Fox 1

A-LEAGUE LIVE
Fri Feb 10 Melb Victory v Central Coast 8.00 pm
Sat Feb 11 Newcastle v Melb Heart 5.30 pm
Sat Feb 11 Sydney v Perth 7.45 pm
Sun Feb 12 Wellington v Brisbane 3.00 pm
Sun Feb 12 Gold Coast v Adelaide 5.30 pm

FOX SPORTS FC
Tue Feb 14 8.30 pm

IN OFF THE POST

mailbag@goalweekly.com

Got something to say? Why don't you share it with the rest of the football community and get it off your chest.

Vent your spleen at mailbag@goalweekly.com or PO Box 142, Port Melbourne, VIC, 3207.

Dear Goal! Weekly,
Living 70k outside of Adelaide I buy Goal! Weekly at every home game of Adelaide United. You don't have a Letters Column but here goes- It has been wonderful since Frank Lowy set up the A-League and Football federation Australia some 5-6 years ago. However, we need to differentiate our football from Australian Rules Football, especially as Foxtel will have an exclusive Aussie Rules channel from 17/2/12 on Channel 504. We should call the code Association Football, as per the Football Associa-

tion in the UK, and Football Association in FIFA. Australia and America are different in having alternative football codes and it is not acceptable to use the slang term 'soccer', (Association - Assoc - hence soccer). Many teams in the English Premier League still use the title Association Football Club - so should we. Many thanks for Goal! Weekly. I will pick up my copy at the next Adelaide United game.
Yours faithfully,
John Mold
Strathalbyn, SA



Thanks to our friends at ICON HOME ENTERTAINMENT the letter of the week wins a DVD copy of AWAYDAYS.

Violent, sexy and funny, AWAYDAYS is a sharp rites of passage film that buzzes with the post-punk energy of its late '70s Liverpool setting. Based on the classic novel by Kevin Sampson, and pulsating to an amazing soundtrack featuring The Cure, Joy Division, Magazine, Echo & The Bunnymen and Ultravox, AWAYDAYS examines identity, fate, and the need to belong.

AWAYDAYS is available to rent, buy or download. What are you waiting for??

Tuggeranong United's youth policy not just small talk

By Anthony Corder

The ACT's largest men's football club, Tuggeranong United, claims to be a development focussed club, and they back it up. The southside club boasts a well known and very longstanding Junior program, but the progression of those players into the senior Premier League ranks is not taken for granted.

Youth coaches Vince Ruiz (PL18s) and Stan Mitchell (PL16s) have been carefully selected by the club to develop Tuggeranong's young talented player into tomorrow's first graders. Both Vince and Stan have played local ACT Premier League themselves, and have many years of coaching young players under their belts. Stan was awarded the Football Federation Australia Coach of the Year in 2010 for his work with TUFC's Junior program. Vince is still remembered as one of Narrabundah FC's most skilful defenders.

Vince and Stan are backed up by their assistant coaches Craig and John, United's Director of Coaching, experienced PL coach Jimmy Bland, and specialist goalkeeper coach Francis Aruwafu, former Solomon Islands national keeper. The youth teams train side by side with their more senior Premier League counterparts, benefiting from the experience of those who have gone before them.

The effort Tuggeranong United have put into their youth teams has been paying off for many years. The club consistently fields first grade sides filled with graduates of the Tuggeranong youth system, the most recent being 17 year old Sean Kidney in 2011. The past two

years have seen a strong core group of youngsters, most of whom have come through these very teams, cutting their teeth in the Rock Premier League.

The message from Tuggeranong United is clear, if you play for our youth teams, you have a genuine path to Premier League selection. "There's no glass ceiling at our club," explains President Anthony Corder, "we don't recruit our first grade separate from our youth teams, we have a clear pathway for players. That's our policy and we back it up."

Tuggeranong United have opportunities for players aged 14 to 17 to become part of the club's youth system. Training is at Curtin Playing fields on Tuesdays and Thursdays, starting at 6:30pm. The season kicks off March 3rd.



18 year old Alex Weber, a product of the TUFC development program, playing in the ACT Rock Premier League during 2011.

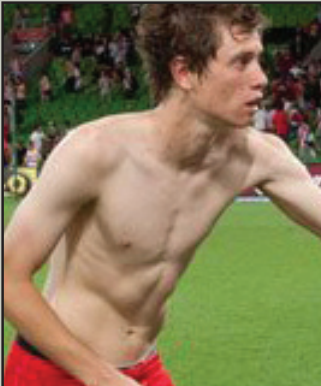
Compiled By Alvaro Rodriguez

WHAT'S HOT

Goodwin are proof these theories do work in principle. I for one believe every single A-League club should run their youth-dev. operation along these lines, as it would fast-track or better ensure the readiness of the league's young talent before making their inevitable moves abroad: a win-win for them personally and Australian football collectively.

WHAT'S NOT

On the flip-side, I find it amazing to hear the arrogance of (I stress) some Victory fans who not only believe the title isn't yet out of the question, but are steadfast in their denial of the need for drastic measures to counter the squad's ongoing malaise. Without going into too much detail (Lord knows I've touched on it all enough in prior columns), the things that need to be remedied are numerous and can really only be solved only by a shift in the club's culture. I strongly believe certain Victory players' time is running out...and yet the coaching staff/board are seemingly ignorant in acknowledging this. Thankfully more and more Victory fans are having their eyes opened to the true nature of the club's problems and the need to take a more long-term approach, as evidenced by the hordes who called in to talkback radio after the insipid performance in the derby. The players, coaching-staff and above all the board owe it to each and every MV fan, member or not, to make the hard decisions and map out the club's future strategies better because to throw all their eggs into the fickle basket of sneaking into this season's Finals with no elaborate plans for beyond, would be just another entry in their annals of short-sightedness.



Go you good thing! Craig Goodwin raised eyebrows with an impressive debut...



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Sydney Prague

BLAST FROM THE PAST



With Roy Hay

For a brief period in the 1950s and 1960s the Sydney club Prague was the most influential football team in Australia. Its recruitment of a number of star players from Austria and Hungary led directly to the suspension of Australia's membership of FIFA in 1960.

It was claimed to be the first club to sponsor a tour by a leading European team and its promotion to the First Division of the New South Wales competition in 1956 marked the arrival of the first migrant team to reach the top level in that competition since the Second World War. It won the First Division championship in 1959, and was Premier, that is it topped the league ladder at the end of the season, in 1959, 1960, 1961 and 1963. Prague virtually monopolised the Sydney Ampol Cup with victories in 1959, 1961, 1962, 1964, 1965 and 1969.

Prague was founded by a group of Czech migrants in 1950. By 1953 Prague, Hakoah and Polonia, along with Sydney Austral (a Dutch club formed in 1948), Lane Cove and St George were all making applications to join the Sydney First Division. However, the directors of the New South Wales Soccer Football Association were considering reducing the major competition to only an eight-team league, ostensibly to improve the standard of the game and reduce the number of matches. Some of the older clubs

were complaining that they had to play 35 matches in a season! Already the new migrant clubs were getting restive about the prospect of exclusion from the top tier. Two years later the directors had a change of mind and increased the league to 12 teams to allow Prague and Austral to join the top division without any of the old district clubs being relegated. When Hakoah was refused permission to follow suit after winning the second division in 1956 the breakaway movement which resulted in the replacement of the old amateur associations by the Australian Soccer Federation began.

In 1958 Prague's playing complement was like a League of Nations as the Sydney Sun-Herald reported in an article entitled, 'Making Aussies. A vital role for soccer,' Prague's top players are four Austrian, three Australians, two Italians, a German, a Hungarian and a Czech. The newly formed Federation of New South Wales Soccer Clubs encouraged the clubs to help new migrants to come to terms with the society in which they found themselves. The article went on, 'The Federation leaves to the clubs the implementation of its assimilation policy. Prague, a leader in this regard, has co-opted the services of a Kensington Public school-teacher to instruct the few members of its team still experiencing difficulty with the "Australian language".' The teacher will take his language classes in the dressing room after training sessions every Tuesday and Thursday evenings. A

Czech mates of Aussie football



Prague's 1959 Ampol Cup and Premiership winning team. From left, Ron Lord, Ken Hiron, Stuart Sherwin, Karol Jaros, Kevin O'Neil, Les Scheinflug, Walther Tamandl, Leo Baumgartner, Erich Schwartz, Andreas Saghi, Herbert Ninaus. Source: New South Wales Soccer Yearbook, 1960, p. 12.

Prague official said this week that the club committee insisted that Australian be the only language spoken in the club. Every member of the club who has qualified for his citizenship papers has become naturalised. Allowing for a bit of propaganda involved, this is as good a description as you will find of the way soccer clubs helped the new migrants from Europe to adapt to Australian society at the time.

While all the domestic and international governance issues were being debated and eventually settled, Prague got on with playing top class football. Its team often had a defence drawn from the United Kingdom or Australia, while its midfield and attack were from Europe. The squad which won the treble in 1959 included Ron Lord in goal, Erwin Ninaus, Ken Hiron, Stuart Sherwin, Kevin O'Neil,

Les Scheinflug, Eric Schwartz, Walter Tamandl, Herbert Ninaus, Andreas Saghi, M Schwartz, R Krenn. In August 1960 in pouring rain APIA and Prague drew 13,187 to watch their match at Wentworth Park, and only 5,000 were under cover that day. Prague won the league having suffered only one defeat all season. But Joe Vlasits' Canterbury babes with the Warren brothers in the squad turned in the upset of the season to down Prague by five goals to two in front of another crowd of 17,872 who paid a club record gate of £4,216 (goodness knows how much that would be in today's money).

In 1961 Prague won the league once again. The competition went down to the final game at Arlington Oval with Canterbury and Prague in contention once again. Canterbury was two points adrift but had the better goal

average so a win would see it jump over Prague. A tight battle ended in a two-all draw giving Prague the title. Its team for the final match was Ron Lord, Ken Hiron, Stuart Sherwin, Walter Tamandl, Erwin Ninaus, Les Scheinflug, G Jones, Andreas Saghi, J Haniotis, F Tamandl and Herbert Ninaus. Prague was less effective in the play-offs and Hakoah won the championship beating Canterbury in the final.

Two years later Prague again came top of the league, but again did not make the grand final. In 1964 Prague sponsored a tour by Swiss club FC Basel, one of the first clubs to arrive now that membership of FIFA had been restored. That tour turned out to be profitable, though its underlying purpose of attracting the Czech coach of Basel, George Sobotka, to join the club came to naught. In 1965 in an

other publicity coup, Prague arranged for Tommy Docherty, then the coach of Chelsea which was on tour that year, to play against another visiting side VfB Stuttgart.

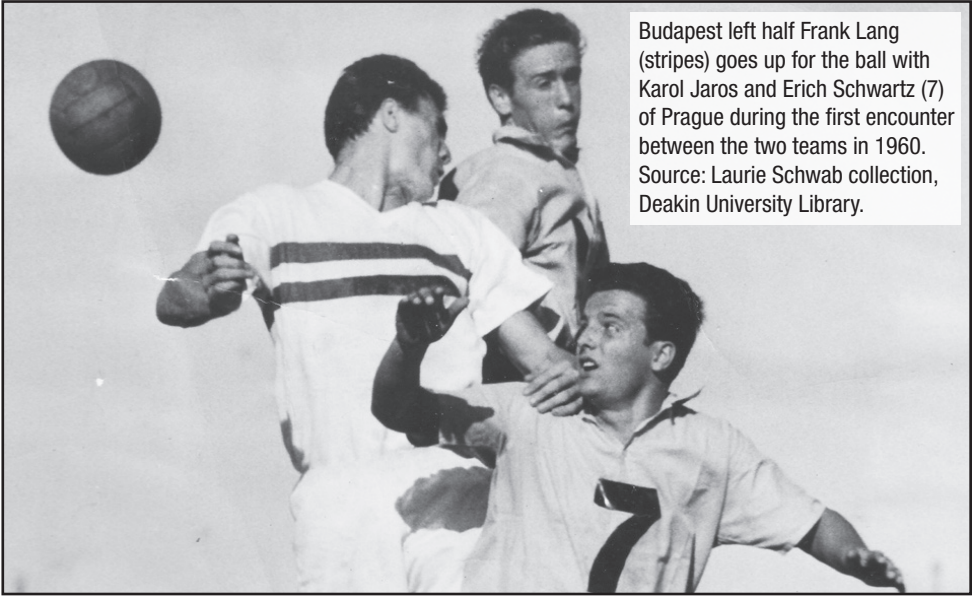
Thereafter the once mighty club began to struggle in mid-table but it continued to do well in the Ampol Cup. The Czech community had always been relatively small and it was not being replenished at the rate of some of the other groups in Sydney. By 1971 Prague was flirting with relegation and in 1973 an arranged marriage with Yugal took place. It was effectively a take-over by the Serbian club and although the name Yugal-Prague was retained the glory days were over and the combined team yo-yoed between the first and second divisions in the 1970s, before brief revivals in 1981 and 1986 when the league and the championships were won.



Alan Marnock of Hakoah and Les Scheinflug (right) of Prague in a heading duel in 1968. Source: Laurie Schwab collection, Deakin University Library.



Prague's 1959 Ampol Cup and Premiership winning team. From left, Ron Lord, Ken Hiron, Stuart Sherwin, Karol Jaros, Kevin O'Neil, Les Scheinflug, Walther Tamandl, Leo Baumgartner, Erich Schwartz, Andreas Saghi, Herbert Ninaus. Source: New South Wales Soccer Yearbook, 1960, p. 12.



Budapest left half Frank Lang (stripes) goes up for the ball with Karol Jaros and Erich Schwartz (7) of Prague during the first encounter between the two teams in 1960. Source: Laurie Schwab collection, Deakin University Library.

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PICS OF ROUND 20



For your eyes only: Fox Sports presenter Melanie MacLaughlan, with microphone in hand, at the Adelaide United v Wellington Phoenix clash Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Oops! Should have taken a left at Albuquerque. This Heart fan is outnumbered in the Victory end. Photo: TIM SIZE

Les
Shorrock's
Action
Packed
Picture
Page



Jets fans are ecstatic after a fifth goal in injury time put the match beyond doubt against rivals Sydney FC. Photo: BEN NEVILLE



AAMI Park is as pretty as a picture as fans enjoy the spectacle of the Melbourne derby. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Mascots await their cue prior to the Heart v Victory derby. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Guess whose mum's got a Whirlpool? Heart's Craig Goodwin doesn't have to go far to get his football kit washed. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Adelaide United fans are full of voice in their match against Phoenix. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

Goals galore in Copa Libertadores opening group stage

Latin Wrap



Francis Fields

Javier Orozco scored both goals to lead Mexican side Cruz Azul to a 2-1 victory over Paraguay's Nacional in the group round of the Copa Libertadores on Wednesday. In two other group matches, Unión Española of Chile defeated Colombia's Junior 2-0, while Nacional of Uruguay defeated Brazil's Vasco da Gama 2-1.

Play in the 32-team group stage kicked off this week with for four more matches set for Friday.

All the action in Cruz Azul's victory in Group 6 took place in the first 30 minutes. With temperatures soaring to 40 degrees Celsius, the Mexicans went ahead in the 5th minute with Orozco's first goal, then made it 2-0 in the 28th with his second. Ariel Bogado scored for Nacional in the 20th.

Argentine referee Nestor Pitana stopped the match twice in each half to let the players rehydrate.

Group 3 took procedures to Santiago, Chile where local side Unión Española came to life after a poor first half controlled mostly by Colombia's Junior.

Emanuel Herrera gave Unión Española the lead in the 64th minute, scoring from a corner kick. A minute later, Fernando Cordero made it 2-0. Cordero also just missed scoring later in the match on long shot that Junior keeper Sebastian Viera tipped over the crossbar.

At Rio de Janeiro, Nacional of Uruguay took a 1-0 lead in the 30th minute of their Group 5 match when Vasco defender Dedé found his own net while trying to clear a corner kick cross. The Uruguayans increased the lead at São Januário stadium just a minute into the second half when Vicente Sánchez scored with a diving header from inside the area.

Vasco pulled one back thanks to striker Alecsandro in the 75th after a cross by former Brazil midfielder Juninho. The Brazilian club had a goal disallowed in the 89th after Ecuadorian striker Carlos Tenorio was offside when he headed the ball into the net.

On Wednesday, Fred scored just three minutes into the match and Fluminense held on to a 1-0 win over Arsenal of Argentina in both teams' opening game in Group 4 of the Copa Libertadores on Tuesday.

Fred got the early winner at the Engenhao stadium with a shot from inside the area after defender Lisandro López failed to clear a cross from the left.

Arsenal pressured at the end but was not able to capitalize on its scoring chances. The Argentine side had the better chances throughout the 90 minutes but could not find a way past Fluminense goalkeeper Diego Cavalieri, who was awarded the man of the match.

Players got into an altercation in the 75th and a few players shoved each other, prompting the match to be stopped for a few moments. Fluminense midfielder Wagner and Arsenal forward Nicolas Aguirre were sent off.

Fluminense also had defender Leandro Euzebio red carded in the 90th following a hard foul. The other two teams in Group 4 are Argentina's Boca Juniors and Venezuela's Zamora.

Fluminense, which also has Thiago Neves and former Chelsea and Portugal midfielder Deco in its squad, was runner-up in the 2008 Copa Libertadores, losing the final at home in a penalty shootout against Ecuador's Liga de Quito.

Mexico's Guadalajara Chivas were



Action from the Copa Libertadores with Unión Española scoring two goals past Colombia's champion Junior within a minute.



From Flinders Park to La Bombonera, Juan Martín del Potro swapped his tennis racket for football boots in Martín Palermo's farewell tribute last weekend.

held to a 1-1 home draw on Tuesday against Ecuadorean champions Deportivo Quito as the group stage of the 2012 Copa Libertadores kicked off across Latin America.

In Wednesday's other matches, Uruguay's Defensor Sporting lost 3-0 at home against Vélez Sarsfield of Argentina.

Seven more games are set for this week with the group stage of the 32-team tournament wrapping up in April. Deportivo Quito took the lead in the Group 7 game against Chivas through Argentine Matías Alustiza, who struck a left foot shot into the bottom right corner of the goal from the edge of the penalty area in the 8th minute.

Chivas, in last position in the Mexican league with just one point from five games, had the majority of the possession against the Ecuadorean side, and finally got rewarded two minutes into stoppage time when Omar Arellano beat the goalkeeper to a left wing cross and headed in.

In the other Group 7 game, David Ospina opened the scoring for Vélez Sarsfield against Defensor Sporting three minutes before halftime, with Mauro Óbolo adding the second in the 82nd.

Sebastián Domínguez wrapped up the game in the 86th, curling a direct freekick from 30 yards (meters) into the top left corner of the net. The Copa Libertadores final is to be played in July.

Argentina's domestic league re-named

As tension rises over the 30th anniversary of the deadly engagement between Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands, the Argentine government has decided to name the upcoming football season in honor its naval ship sunk by British torpedoes in the conflict.

In a special ceremony at the Casa Rosada, the Argentine government house in the capital Buenos Aires, president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (pictured) announced the changes that would come into effect as of today.

The season, which begins Friday, will be the known as the first division "Crucero General Belgrano," or Cruiser General Belgrano in English.

The death toll in the war among the Argentine army were 649 soldiers, 323 of whom were crew members on the Belgrano. The Argentine government owns the rights to Argentine first-division matches and shows all the games on free-to-air television.

Defending champions Boca Juniors hosts Olimpo of Bahía Blanca on the opening day as Lanús plays San

Lorenzo.

The tournament trophy has also been renamed as the "Gaucha Rivero", in honour of Antonio Rivero, a local gaucho cowboy who lived in the islands and fought during the British invasion of 1833.

It is not the first time that football in Argentina has been renamed in reference to the Falkland War. In 1982, the Metropolitano championship was named "Islas Malvinas" under the dictatorship of Reynaldo Bignone. That championship was won by Estudiantes de La Plata.

Advertising time during the matches is often used to promote the accomplishments of the Argentine government, which says the islands it calls "Las Islas Malvinas" them belong to Argentina.

Palermo farewell

Martin Palermo commented last Saturday on his farewell match at the Bombonera stadium on exiting the Boca club, saying that it was "more than he could have hoped for" and went on to show his appreciation to his supporters by saying, "thank you to you Boca, you are great."

Palermo, the iconic Boca Juniors forward, was playing his final match at the Bombonera stadium.

The match began at 8 pm with Héctor Baldassi as the referee. Even though Palermo retired in June after a successful 20 year career, his farewell and match paying homage to him was taking place tonight, before he moves on to make his coaching debut.

Thus, the tall, shy forward once again stepped onto the Bombonera field, which saw him make many of his historical goals and the Martin team will be coached by Carlos Bianchi.

Palermo scored 237 goals in Boca and won 14 tournaments. His football career began in Estudiantes de La Plata in 1991 until he was transferred to Boca, where he played between 1997 and 2001. After a two year stint with various Spanish teams, most notably with Villarreal he returned to Boca in 2004, his extraordinary scoring abilities untouched and confirmed his idol status.

Flamengo may lose Ronaldinho
Flamengo could lose Ronaldinho after Brazil's most popular club ended its partnership with sports marketing group Traffic.

Traffic has been paying the majority of Ronaldinho's salary, and Flamengo will now have to find ways to come up with the nearly \$700,000 that the player reportedly receives. Club president Patricia Amorim said Wednesday that she is confident Flamengo will still be

able to pay Ronaldinho, but acknowledges the club will have to increase its revenue.

She says Flamengo will inherit the rights to Ronaldinho's image and that should allow the club to make some extra money.

Ronaldinho's wages were delayed for several months last year.

The club and Traffic had been trying to reach a new agreement on a contract involving the rights to explore the player's image for quite some time. Both sides are blaming each other for the split. It announced the company was not given priority to negotiate deals with sponsors that could increase the team's revenue, while Flamengo said the marketing group was responsible for delaying the wages of the two-time FIFA player of the year.

Traffic director Fernando Goncalves told local media that the sports marketing group admits it owes money to Ronaldinho, but said Flamengo owes it the right to negotiate the team's sponsor. There were reports the company was upset that Flamengo made a deal with the sports marketing firm "Nine," which was founded by former Brazil star Ronaldo.

Last week, Ronaldinho threatened not to play if he wasn't paid the nearly 3.75 million reais (\$2.1 million) that was reportedly owed to him. Ronaldinho's agent and brother, Roberto Assis Moreira, said many teams in and outside Brazil are interested in signing the 31-year-old former Barcelona star if he was not paid.

Ronaldinho became one of the most high-profile acquisitions by a Brazilian club when he joined Flamengo at the beginning of last year. He struggled in his first few months and was jeered by fans and heavily criticized by the local media. The skillful midfielder bounced back and was instrumental in Flamengo's title in the Rio de Janeiro state championship in 2011. He then helped Flamengo earn a spot at this year's Copa Libertadores, and also regained a spot in the national team.

Mexican Apertura league wrap
Tigres defeated América 1-0 on Sunday, ending America's undefeated start to the season.

It was a positive result coming off a disappointing week from elimination in the Copa Libertadores first phase at the hands of Chilean club Unión Española and exposing coach Ricardo Ferretti to an array of criticism for fielding a second-string team.

Chilean Héctor Mancilla got the only goal in the 35th minute for Tigres against America, deflecting a shot from the edge of the penalty area into the net.

For América, it was a performance that needed a goal to reflect their hard work throughout the match.

Played at the Azteca stadium, Club América squandered its chance to move into first place.

Coach Miguel Herrera compared the situation with some interesting words at the post-match conference. "Teams like Barcelona also lose. No team is unbeatable nor perfect. We have started well this season and we must continue to hold our heads high".

There were also words coming from Tigres' Elías Hernández sparking tensions before and after the match claiming that América, undoubtedly Mexico's most popular team, was no longer a 'big' team.

"The big team is Tigres, the one that's living in the moment and was just crowned champion," Hernández claimed.

Asked if he thought América was a big team, the 23-year-old, recently arrived from Pachuca replied, "I don't think so. That's in the past."

Hernández's argument is largely based on Tigres' recent coronation as Mexican champions in the 2011 Apertura tournament. América, meanwhile, has not won a domestic title since 2005 and endured one of the worst campaigns in its history during the Apertura, finishing in 17th place out of 18, collecting only three wins from 17 games.

By hinting that although América has a rich past and a history of a 'big team', its under-par results and performances in recent years has given it the mentality of a 'small' one.

América fall to sixth in the standings at 2-2-1, with eight points. Tigres move into third place with ten points (3-1-1).

In other weekend results, Santos Laguna kept its lead atop the Mexico Clausura football championship with a 2-1 victory over Pumas over the weekend.

In Santos' victory, Christian Suárez of Ecuador scored first for Santos in the 12th minute, lifting a shot past the keeper after a swift counterattack. Rodolfo Salinas made it 2-0 in 20th, but then headed into his own net from a corner 10 minutes later.

Atlante beat Querétaro with Osvaldo Martínez curling a free kick from 25 yards (meters) into the top corner in injury time. Goals from German Alemanno and Argentinian Pablo Vitti put Querétaro into the lead twice in the second half, with Martínez equalizing the first time for Atlante and Juan Ezequiel Cuevas getting the other.

Cruz Azul won 2-0 against Jaguares, Pachuca defeated Toluca 4-3, Puebla drew 1-1 with Club Tijuana, Monterrey

won 3-0 over San Luis and Estudiantes Tecos drew 0-0 with Atlas in the all-Guadalajara derby.

Adriano ordered to strict eating diet
Corinthians is keeping former Brazil star Adriano at the team's hotel and is ordering him to go on a strict diet to try to get the forward back in shape.

The team said Wednesday that Adriano will have to stay inside the hotel at the team's headquarters at least through the weekend, eating only what doctors give him and practicing three times a day.

Corinthians physical trainer Fabio Mahseredjian said the "more drastic" decision to lock Adriano up was made because the team feels he won't improve his condition unless he stops eating excessively.

"We locked him here because this way we can have more control of what he eats, of how he rests," Mahseredjian said. "You can only lose weight if you stop eating."

Mahseredjian said a team nutritionist has prepared a specific diet for the 29-year-old. He will be receiving a pre-prepared plate of food separately from the other players, and especially picked snacks will be delivered to his room at predetermined times.

"We are doing everything we can to give him a chance to get better," Corinthians coach Tite said. "We want what is best for him and what is best for us."

Adriano has played sparingly since recovering from surgery on his Achilles tendon last year and is in danger of not being included in the team's Copa Libertadores roster.

The surgery was in April and Adriano only returned to action at the end of the year, visibly out of shape. He came off the bench to score a crucial winner for Corinthians in the final rounds of the Brazilian league, helping the team get in position to eventually win the title last year. He is yet to play in the 2012 Sao Paulo state championship.

Mahseredjian said Adriano has reacted well to his confinement.

"He knows we are trying to do what's best for him," he said. "But he also needs to do his part. He needs to know that the older you get, the harder it is (to remain in shape)."

Adriano made many headlines for off-the-field problems in recent years, including his involvement in a minor car accident, a public altercation with a girlfriend and a police investigation for alleged ties with drug lords in the shantytowns where he grew up—although he was never charged.

Pardew reaches new heights on Tyneside

LONDON CALLING



With Sam Collins in the UK

There's a growing correlation between Alan Pardew's early adulthood and Newcastle United's season. In the late 1970's, Pardew would manage between glazier apprenticeship and plying his trade for non-league Yeovil Town. The NatWest Tower in the City of London - a skyscraper now known as 'Tower 42', currently the fifth tallest building in the capital - is one of the buildings the 50-year old worked following his adolescence. Altitude is therefore something Pardew is accustomed to, yet, no one, not even the Wimbledon-born manager himself, could have foreseen the heights that he or Newcastle would reach this campaign.

With fourteen games remaining in the Premier League, the Magpies sit fifth in the division, just two points off 4th-placed Chelsea. But things may have worked out very differently had the fans at the Sports Direct Arena had their way. When controversial club owner Mike Ashley fired Chris Hughton as boss in December 2010, despite

lauding him as "exceptional", the fans on Tyneside were asked by the city's newspaper 'The Evening Chronicle' for their opinion on who should take-over as coach. Over 1000 fans took part in the poll, and only 14 voted for Pardew. He fared slightly better with Sky Sports' ballot - 5.5% of fans asked for the former West Ham boss to arrive. Steve Wraith, editor of the 'Toon Talk fanzine', was critical of his appointment. "When you look at his CV, it doesn't make pleasant reading. If he lasts five and a half years (the length of his contract) I will eat my hat." Even rival managers sent text messages to Pardew warning him he was "mad". With such paltry support from the Geordie faithful, and querying from his fellow coaches, Pardew would have been forgiven for refusing the job with all the inevitable apprehension. But instead, he revelled in the anxiety.

After guiding Newcastle to a respectable 12th-placed finish last season, the summer brought upheaval for Pardew. Key first-team players Kevin Nolan, Jose Enrique and Joey Barton were sold, in addition to Andy Carroll's departure to Liverpool six months earlier, but only £12m of the £45m recouped from the transfers out, was spent. With the board's failure to agree deals with players he asked for, Pardew was left aggrieved. This frustrating period prior to the campaign has earned Pardew - who's last stint in the top-flight was with



The sky's the limit for Toon Army boss, Alan Pardew.

Charlton Athletic in 2007, a year which resulted in relegation - extra commendation. Signing players on a low budget left many pundits tipping the club for relegation back in August. Now the Toon hold realistic ambitions of competing with Europe's elite next season for the first time 2002/03, - when Newcastle reached the second phase of the Champions League under legendary boss Sir Bobby Robson. Pardew isn't holding back either. "We've got to try and chase Chelsea down. Every-one game is a cup final." This ambition

is endearing the Newcastle boss to the fans who once despised him. But it's not all just about Pardew.

Much that goes on behind the scenes in modern day football is over looked. Ask most managers where they would be without their assistant or their goal-keeping coach. Or, more relevantly, their chief scout. Pardew is no different. Whilst leading his players to a meritorious league position, it's another recent arrival at St.James' Park - as the stadium was formerly known - who

should receive recognition for the engineering of Newcastle's current rise. "Our strategy is quite clear," explains Graham Carr, the club's prime talent-spotter, "We have realistic targets and we're not going to pay £20m for anybody."

Back in his home town, Carr is combining what he loves best; looking for the finest young talent for the club that he adores. It's a perfect mixture. After spells with the likes of Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester City,

the 67-year old's heroics are behind the pandemonium that exists on Tyneside these days. The signings of little known central midfielders Cheick Tioté and Yohan Cabaye for a combined fee of £7.9m drew great accolades for Carr, though there is little doubt over Newcastle's man of the moment. Senegalese striker Demba Ba joined the Magpies last summer on a free transfer from West Ham United, and the 26-year old has been in devastating form. The former Hoffenheim powerhouse has netted 16 goals in 20 league appearances since joining the club. So with all these quality additions, the squad is set for the remainder of the campaign, right? Wrong. Resting on their laurels is not something Pardew or Carr are prepared to do. Midway through January, Newcastle spent £10m on Ba's international team-mate Papiss Cisse. Arriving from Freiburg, Cisse was given the precious number nine shirt, once worn by legendary striker Alan Shearer. Only two players scored more goals in the Bundesliga during Cisse's time in Germany, and the forward was always the "first choice" replacement for Carroll, according to Pardew, after scouting him for "the best part of two years." The man from Dakar got off to the perfect start last weekend, scoring on his debut against Aston Villa - the first Newcastle player to score on his debut in four years.

Naturally, the problem for Newcastle could be hanging on to their flourishing stars, particularly if the Magpies don't make the top four in May. But for now, it's all plain sailing for the Toon. And the man who used to fit windows 600ft up in the sky is now even higher. These days, Pardew is on top of the world.

FAREWELL TO A GENTLEMAN

By Mike Salter

It says a great deal for the esteem in which Vitezslav Lavicka is held at Sydney FC that although many fans drew a sigh of relief at the news of his imminent departure, none could find many negative words to say about him as a person.

It is the decent, humble, affable nature of "Vitja" that has kept him in the good books throughout his period at the helm of the club. His tactics and selections over the past two seasons may have had plenty of fans and pundits scratching their heads, but all of the sceptics in question will no doubt wish him the very best for the future. He deserves such warm sentiments.

At the start of the 2009/10 season, Sydney FC could have been called the league's basketcase club with considerable justice. After a championship win in the league's inaugural season, the fans had endured three years of mediocre football, three coaches who had signally failed to live up to expectations, and a series of off-field dramas which had earned the club nothing but widespread contempt. Into this maelstrom stepped a largely unknown Czech coach, whose arrival was met with suspicion from many quarters. Lavicka answered the doubters on the field and off. Courageously refusing to build his team around high-profile marquee signing John Aloisi, he instead built a compact 4-4-2 unit that relied on the swift movement and interplay of Alex Brosque and Mark Bridge up front, supported by the wily Steve Corica, who appeared a rejuvenated figure under the Czech. Training sessions, which had been unsophisticated, puzzling, perfunctory or a combination of



Vitezslav Lavicka and Karol Kisel after winning the 2009/10 HAL title.

all three under Sydney's previous coaching incumbents, now became genuinely professional, as noted by plenty of the fans who occasionally turned up to them. "Mah-xi-mum in-ten-si-ty!", one of Vitja's signature phrases during the sessions, became a much-loved catchcry for some of the Sky Blue faithful. In his relations with media and fans, Lavicka could not have been a greater contrast to his predecessors. Unlike the truculent Terry Butcher, the morose Branko Culina and the smugly arrogant John Kosmina, Lavicka fielded questions with quiet politeness and respect, and never forgot to thank the fans who attended the training sessions out at North Ryde (unlike Kosmina, who treated them with undisguised contempt). The results followed. Sydney surged to the top of the table and, despite a stutter towards the end of the regular season, they secured the premiership in fitting style, with a fine win over their rivals Melbourne Victory. Earlier

in the season they had defeated Melbourne away in one of the finest performances Sydney fans had ever witnessed; Brosque and Bridge were magnificent, and defensive kingpin Simon Colosimo had one of the games of his career. They repeated the feat, this time with recourse to penalties, in the grand final in March, and Lavicka's status as a club legend was assured. The aftermath of that auspicious beginning to his Sydney FC career showed, in the eyes of some, Lavicka's limitations. In 2010/11 he steadfastly stuck to his favoured midfield diamond despite indications that a change would be beneficial, and some of his signings had the fans scratching their heads. Sydney's insipid performances in Lavicka's second season, however, were not all down to their coach; a long-term injury to marquee signing Nick Carle, who had replaced the distinguished Corica as creator-in-chief, crippled Sydney up front, and the departure of Colosimo left

a significant lacuna at the back which Sydney struggled to fill. Brosque's departure for Japan late in the season put the lid on a fairly miserable campaign. 2011/12 has been a mixed bag, with Carle back to fitness but Brosque badly missed. Again, Lavicka has been faithful to his preferred tactics, but he has been unable to settle on a functioning first eleven, and the criticism from fans and media has become quite acute. The club had probably begun to feel that his methods were becoming a little stale, and with Lavicka missing his absent family as well, the decision not to extend his contract beyond the end of the season is easy to understand. Yet his triumphant first season in charge will never be forgotten, nor will his modest, warm and unfailingly professional manner. Vitja, best of luck in your future endeavours, in football and in life. Sydney FC, and Australian football, will miss you.

Capello out after meeting with FA

FABIO Capello quit the post of England manager after a meeting with FA chairman David Bernstein and general secretary Alex Horne at Wembley on Wednesday.

An FA statement read: "The Football Association can confirm that Fabio Capello has today resigned as England manager."

On Monday, the Italian, 65, publicly challenged the FA's decision to strip John Terry of the captaincy.

The FA's statement continued: "The discussions focused on the FA Board's decision to remove the England team captaincy from John Terry, and Fabio Capello's response through an Italian broadcast interview.

"In a meeting for over an hour, Fabio's resignation was accepted and he will leave the post of England manager with immediate effect."

Bernstein said: "I would like to stress that during [the] meeting and throughout his time as England manager, Fabio has conducted himself in an extremely professional manner.

"We have accepted Fabio's resignation, agreeing this is the right decision. We would like to thank Fabio for his work with the England team and wish him every success in the future."

A media conference with Bernstein and the Club England management team took place at Wembley Stadium at noon yesterday (Thursday).

Wednesday's meeting was the first time Capello had met the FA since their decision to remove the armband from Terry pending the outcome of his court case in July.

Terry, 31, denies a charge of allegedly racially abusing QPR's Anton Ferdinand.

On Sunday, Capello told Italy's state broadcaster RAI he did not believe someone should be punished by sporting authorities before a court had reached a verdict.

"I thought it was right that Terry should keep the captain's armband," said Capello, whose first game in charge was on 6 February 2008, against Switzerland.



Mam Mia! Is this how Fabio Capello and the FA parted company?



EPL Wrap
Steven Talevski
United stage comeback

Manchester United staged an amazing comeback from three nil down to earn a point against Chelsea in a controversial clash at Stamford Bridge.

Manchester were rewarded two dubious penalties from referee Howard Webb mid-way through the second half which Wayne Rooney comfortably slotted home before substitute Javier Hernandez was left unmarked on the edge of the six yard box to head home the equaliser.

Chelsea had earlier gone into half time with a one nil lead courtesy of a Jonny Evans own goal and then tripled their lead within five minutes of the second half from a fantastic Juan Mata volley and a David Luiz close range header.

Referee Howard Webb's influence on the game has been questioned by Chelsea Manager Andre Villas-Boas, in particular on the decision of the second awarded penalty where it seemed that Danny Welbeck had caught his own leg with Branislav Ivanovic's.

"We expect in top games top refs, and it has not been happening for us," said Villas-Boas in his post-match press conference.

"It didn't happen for us at Old Trafford with two off-side goals and maybe with today's dubious decision, which, in the end, shaped the running of the game.

"The biggest disappointment is the way it happened. In both games they [referees] have had a direct influence on the result and today a dubious decision helped stimulate United to 3-3.

"I don't know if he [Webb] is com-



Referee Howard Webb awarded two penalties to Man Utd.

pensating for something in the first half. The second one is a wrong decision. [Danny] Welbeck's legs got caught with Ivanovic. You can't give a penalty for that, I'm sure. I don't know if Howard Webb has the correct angle to make that decision."

The result leaves Manchester United two points below Manchester City who comfortably defeated Fulham three nil at the Etihad Stadium.

However Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney has echoed his side's confidence that they can go on and win the League title claiming that the point against Chelsea could win United the league.

"We fought well, fought hard and, you never know, that point could win us the league," Rooney told Sky Sports. The disappointing draw for Chelsea leaves them in fourth place, a mere one point above fifth placed Newcastle United who recorded a 2-1 victory over Aston Villa.

Newcastle's win has been dubbed the double Demba delight, as striker Demba Ba slotted home his sixteenth goal in his last 17 appearances for the club, while substitute and new signing Papiss Demba Cisse netted the winner to cancel out Robbie Keane's earlier equaliser.

Arsenal also moved up to sixth position in their pursuit of the fourth European Champions League spot as they thumped hapless Blackburn 7-1.

Meanwhile, Liverpool dropped to seventh position as they drew nil all at Anfield against Tottenham who now drop seven points behind ladder leader Manchester City.

Down the bottom of the table, Wigan remain last despite a one all draw to Everton while Bolton moved into the relegation zone with a two nil loss to Norwich as Wolverhampton defeated ten men Queens Park Rangers 2-1. In other results, Swansea defeated West Bromwich Albion 2-1 at the Hawthorns and Sunderland continued their hot streak of form defeating Stoke City one nil.

EPL PREVIEW

This weekend's fixtures kick off with the fierce and rich in history derby between Manchester United and Liverpool at Old Trafford.

The fixture is set to pit against Patrice Evra and Luis Suarez for the first time since the controversial racial incident between the two earlier this season.

In what is set to be a rowdy recep-



Patrice Evra and Luis Suarez come face to face again.

tion for the Uruguayan striker, Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney has claimed that Suarez should have been sent off for a kick to Tottenham midfielder Scott Parker.

"If ref sees that kick from Suarez and books him for it should be red," Rooney wrote on Twitter.

Rooney later squashed people questioning his aggression on the football field, writing "For everyone saying about my aggression i aint had 1 yellow card in premier league this season."

Both sides will go into the clash needing a win if Manchester United want to continue to pile the pressure on table toppers Manchester City while Liverpool look to fight for a Champions League position.

Top of the table Manchester City will look for three points when they travel to Villa Park to face Aston Villa with goalkeeper Joe Hart saying that the club needs to focus on their own fixtures and not of Manchester United's.

"We can only concentrate on ourselves," Hart said.

"I don't think we know their fixtures, and I'm sure they don't know ours.

"They've just got to focus on what they're doing, and we'll do what we

can do to help ourselves. We can only do that by winning.

"We've got a lot more things on our plate than worrying about Man United. We've got a big game against Villa coming up and we've got really important teams to play against.

"Whoever is in the chasing pack, or involved in the title race, will do what they've got to do. I'm pretty sure they don't care what's going on elsewhere."

In the Premier Leagues other major clash this weekend, third placed Tottenham host fifth placed Newcastle in which is set to be an entertaining encounter.

Chelsea, who is in between those teams on the table, faces Everton at Goodison Park.

Bottom placed Wigan face fellow relegation zone strugglers Bolton at the Reebok Stadium, while second from bottom Blackburn host sixteenth placed QPR at Ewood Park who will be without suspended new signing Djibril Cisse.

In other games, Fulham face Stoke at Craven Cottage, West Bromwich Albion travel to Wolverhampton, Swansea host Norwich and Arsenal visit the Stadium of light to take on inform Sunderland.

Champions League returns

After two months away, the UEFA Champions League returns the week commencing this Wednesday morning (Australian time) with the first batch of round of 16 first legs.

The knockout stage, with reigning champions FC Barcelona and surprise package APOEL FC among the teams in action will surely excite football fans worldwide..

Josep Guardiola's side may be struggling to keep pace with Real Madrid CF in the Liga but they are sure to present a tough task for Leverkusen. Though even their group stage campaign – in which they dropped just two points – was somewhat overshadowed by Madrid, who emerged from their section with six wins from six, there is no doubt about the threat posed by last season's victors.

One of the picks of the round will surely be AC Milan v Arsenal. Milan are unlikely to be delighted at drawing Arsenal, with the Rossoneri's last three UEFA Champions League campaigns having ended in elimination by an English side in the round of 16. Still jostling with Juventus for Serie A supremacy, Milan have not experienced the most fluent of European challenges so far and will no doubt recall exiting the competition at the hands of Arsenal in 2007/08.

The Gunners, still without Jack Wilshere, have endured something of a lull since they were last in continental action, but will have been boosted by ending a four-game winless run in the Premier League in emphatic style on 4 February – triumphing 7-1 at home to Blackburn Rovers FC.

SBS will be broadcastng games live from this Wednesday morning.

Champions League

Bayer 04 Leverkusen v FC Barcelona
Olympique Lyonnais v APOEL FC
AC Milan v Arsenal FC
FC Zenit St Petersburg v Benfica

CSKA Moskva v Real Madrid
Napoli v Chelsea FC
Marseille v FC Inter Milano
FC Basel v FC Bayern München

Tactical Chess Match Replaced By Goal Scoring Free-For-All



Robert Davis

There once was a time when matches between the title chasing sides in The Premiership would be built up to such a platform that it was inevitable that the event itself would never live up to the billing.

For a period of almost ten years at the turn of the millennium, only Manchester United, Chelsea and Arsenal were considered serious contenders for The Premier League crown. Liverpool did finish in second place on two occasions (Gerard Houllier in 01/02 and Rafa Benitez in 08/09) but were for the most part considered outsiders for the title.

When matches between the 'big three' came along, it seemed they only came along once every few years. The hype and media surrounding these matches would begin almost a week before the match even took place.

Arsene Wenger and Alex Ferguson mind games would be studied, scrutinised and eventually published in every newspaper in the country. Jose Mourinho press conferences watched over and over again as if I was a teenage girl watching the new Justin Bieber video.



The EPL scores this year are starting to resemble NBA scoreboards...

Then the match would finally arrive, your whole week leading up to what should be the best England has to offer football fans, only to find yourself watching what can only be described as a tactical chess match where both teams are out there not to go and win a match, but scared to lose it.

There are of course arguments to this, having seen some classic matches between the three teams over the years, but it seems only the events surrounding the football are truly remembered. Martin Keown assaulting Ruud Van Nistelrooy, Cesc Fabregas throwing pizza at Ferguson are two that instantly spring to mind.

Two teams battling each other tactically is also nothing to criticise, most notably watching Chelsea play

all the tricks and defend so well under Mourinho to hold on to a one goal lead.

In the end though, the matches would feel like an anti-climax. All the build up to watch two teams not willing to take a chance to go out and win a match.

The introduction and rise of Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester City seems to have changed all that this season. No longer can United, Arsenal and Chelsea rely on simply not loosing against their rivals for the title and pick up points elsewhere in the league. With Liverpool also spending big, it can be argued that what was a top three has turned into a top six.

With more teams now challenging, there seems to be a big match in The Premiership every week, which

is by no means a bad thing! More importantly though, with the matches being more frequent, it is seemingly having an affect on how they go into these matches between each other. City beating United at Old Trafford 6-1 is one result that will live long in the memory of every football fan for a long time. Along with United earlier in the season beating Arsenal 8-2 at the same ground. Arsenal then redeeming themselves with an equally stunning 5-3 victory against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge. Tottenham losing to City 5-1 at home before beating Liverpool 4-0 three weeks later. Liverpool themselves then picked up impressive away victories against Arsenal and Chelsea. Never have matches between the big sides in the league created such a goal frenzy, a formula which contin-

ued over the weekend when Chelsea went 3-0 up inside 50 minutes, only to eventually be held to a 3-3 draw against the red half of Manchester.

The matches in previous years have been tighter due to a lack competition for The Premiership. Arsenal losing to United or Chelsea would essentially end their hopes of winning the league and vice versa. With more competition in the title race and what seems like a match between one of the six challengers each week, the idea that a team can redeem themselves almost instantly to a rival loss seems to have led to more open games.

The frequency of the matches has also calmed the media circus that usually surrounds them. No longer will the title swing so heavily to one side after the match, therefore mak-

ing the matches slightly less damaging to another sides league hopes.

The blue side of Manchester seem to be benefiting from the drama more than anyone else and a lot of credit goes to Roberto Mancini. The Italian has got his tactics right when it matters and with a bit of luck along the way (Liverpool away, Tottenham at home), he sees his side top of the table. Seemingly watching their rivals battle away at each other, to then pick up the pieces and pick off what is put in front of them. How they fare for the rest of the season is almost a mystery. They find themselves in uncharted territory and have certainly seen a dip in from since the new year. Put this alongside having to play in the Europa League and an almost certain late resurgence from United makes for an interesting end to the season.

For the time being though, it seems the goals will continue to come. But is this a good thing for the English sides? United and City both knocked out of The Champions League and the remaining English clubs in the competition, Arsenal and Chelsea, way off the standard set by Barcelona and Real Madrid.

Does a more exciting Premier League lead to less domination from our teams on a European scale? A question that will have to be answered within the next few years. For the mean time, let's all enjoy the fast paced, end to end goal frenzies that The Premiership has always promised and finally delivered.



Luca Cetta

Big guns struggle

The weather continued to wreak havoc in Italy as the leaders endured a difficult weekend. Zlatan Ibrahimovic will miss Milan's next three matches after his sending off against Napoli, while Roma stunned Inter.

In a throwback to years past, all Serie A matches (except Lazio's trip to Genoa) were played at Sunday, 3pm. The move came about because of the heavy snowfall which continues to cause chaos throughout Europe. While Cesena - Catania and Roma - Inter were initially scheduled for Saturday, they were then postponed and while the former was not played, the match in the capital was set for a day later.

Roma stunned the Nerazzurri, their 4-0 win a complete turnaround from the midweek debacle at Cagliari. Fabio Borini netted twice and Bojan Krkic scored the sealer to show the continued development of the Roma revolution. Luis Enrique was happy but cautious afterwards, noting: "It was a great day for us and a wonderful victory after the defeat to Cagliari. But it won't count for anything if we don't find consistency every single week." Even better news was to come for Roma as it was announced afterwards Daniele De Rossi had renewed his contract - set to expire in June - until 2017.

Meanwhile, Inter, which gave its "worst performance of the season," according to captain Javier Zanetti, has now conceded nine goals in three matches. The solidity which formed



Roma's Daniele De Rossi takes control during the 4-0 thumping of Inter Milan last weekend.

the basis of their Milan derby victory and seven-match winning streak has seemingly evaporated.

Milan are in the midst of a tricky run of fixtures and welcomed Napoli to the Stadio Giuseppe Meazza. A cagey affair which ended 0-0 was given a huge talking point midway through the second half when Ibrahimovic and Salvatore Aronica had a coming-together. The Swede clipped Aronica across the face and was shown a red card. While Milan have revealed they will appeal the severity of the sentence, as it stands Ibra is set to miss matches against Udinese, Cesena and Juventus.

Juve had an easier task on paper in hosting Siena, but found a sturdy wall in their path. Time and again in the 0-0 draw the Turin giants were foiled by their less-illustrious opponents, so much so that Coach Antonio Conte praised Siena's defensive efforts after the match. Meanwhile, director general Beppe Marotta conceded Juve have a problem breaking down the smaller teams. Although not as severe an issue as last season, this was Juve's fourth draw at home, with previous stalemates coming against

Bologna, Genoa and Cagliari.

Lazio wanted their match in Genoa postponed because of snow in Rome which meant the team was unable to train for two days, while their flight was delayed by several hours. On a frozen Stadio Luigi Ferraris pitch, Hernanes went down injured in the warm-up and it only got worse for Lazio. Rodrigo Palacio, plus Bosko Jankovic's brace, put the Grifoni 3-0 up minutes into the second half. Lazio fought back with two goals, but could not salvage a point.

Udinese also fell to a 3-2 score, at the hands of Fiorentina. Antonio Di Natale put the visitors ahead with a sublime chipped finish in blustery conditions, but Stevan Jovetic scored twice from the spot to help the Viola secure a second straight win. Palermo defeated 10-man Atalanta 2-1, with Fabrizio Miccoli continuing his scoring run after a midweek hat-trick. Sebastian Giovinco was on target as Parma won 2-1 at Chievo, while the matches between Lecce and Bologna plus Novara and Cagliari ended goalless.

An Ibrahimovic-less Milan travels to Udine on Saturday seeking to keep the pressure up on Juventus, while

also hoping to put distance between them and third-placed Udinese. Ibra's absence is a blow for a side struggling with over ten players missing through injury and suspension. Udinese's ten wins gives them Serie A's best home record.

The other clubs in the European places will be expecting to claim maximum points. Bologna entertains Juventus, who are still unbeaten, but do not hold an aura of invincibility. They will look to address the issue of defeating bottom-half clubs without Simone Pepe, expected to miss due to injury.

Lazio play host to Cesena on Thursday, with the Biancocelesti hoping Hernanes recovers from injury. Tommaso Rocchi will be out for at least a fortnight, while Mobido Diakite is suspended after a red card in Genoa. Rivals Roma are away at Siena and as Luis Enrique warned, they will need to show consistency. Despite their lowly position of 17th on the ladder, Siena have conceded just 22 goals - a record only bettered by four clubs.

Inter are at home to Novara, looking to get their Champions League push back on track after a week in which they picked up just one point out of nine. Novara are bottom and in desperate need of points to kick-start their salvation bid.

Like Juventus, Napoli have struggled with lower-ranked clubs and must find a way to overcome that issue, as well as prepare for their Champions League clash with Chelsea in the best possible fashion, at home to Chievo.

Parma host a Fiorentina side in a confident mood after picking up two straight victories, while Atalanta are seeking to turn around a horrible start to 2012 at home to relegation threatened Lecce. Cagliari will hope to take advantage of Palermo's poor record on the road as Catania are back in action after two postponements to host Genoa.

Michel new coach of Seville



Pepe Lopez

Former Spanish International and Real Madrid star "Michel" has replaced Marcelino Garcia Toral as coach of Seville FC until May, with a verbal agreement for a year contract extension depending on his performance this season, which is believed to be a club targeted European Champions League qualification position.

The Seville FC web-site published the following statement on the day of Marcelino's dismissal: "Sevilla have taken the decision this morning to dismiss the first team coach Marcelino Garcia Toral owing to the negative run of results by the team, with seven matches without a victory, during which time only two points have been won. The decision was taken after the president, Jose Maria del Nido, and sporting director Ramon Rodriguez Monchi met with the coach to evaluate the sporting situation. Soon after the meeting Monchi communicated to the coach the decision taken.

Sevilla want to publicly thank Marcelino for his professionalism and work, and regret having to have taken a drastic decision due to the results."

Incoming coach Michel played with Real Madrid for 14 years, playing 404 games and scoring 97 goals, Michel also won 66 international caps for Spain and scored 21 international goals between the years 1985 and 1992. Michel previously coached Spanish club Getafe and the Real Madrid B team.

In other coaching news, unnamed sources have claimed that Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho will coach Chelsea FC in England next season.

The unnamed source speaking in re-

gards to Chelsea FC leaked the following information: "He knows things are a mess there (at Chelsea FC) right now. He also knows it would be difficult to go back and make the same impact as before.

(However) Winning the Premier League title back to back in his first two years at a club that had not been champions for 50 years was incredible.

That's why he's still loved by the fans and why he still loves the club. They were special days. But before agreeing, he would want things very clear between him and Roman Abramovich. He would say 'Roman, you are the owner and I am the boss here. Let's work together and the power is in our hands. For Jose, that would be the perfect partnership.'

Meanwhile, Barcelona and Valencia will do battle in the 2nd leg of the Spanish Cup Semi-Final at Nou Camp to determine which team will go through to play Basque club Athletic Bilbao in the final, later in May this year. The first leg in Valencia finished 1-1, Barcelona scoring a valuable equaliser and away goal. Athletic Bilbao defeated Spanish Division B club Mirandes 8-3 on aggregate to advance to the final.

Valencia and Barcelona are sure to become intimate with each other's game, in less than two weeks time, the pair will meet again at the Nou Camp in round 23 of La Liga.



Michel

Balkan Wrap



Alex Milic

Futsal European Championships Croatia 2012

Croatia is through to the Semi-Finals of the European Futsal Championships held in their backyard.

The hosts won both of their group matches, firstly overcoming Romania 2:1 and then took the points against the Czech Republic in a nine goal thriller 5:4. In the Quarter Finals Mato Stankovic's men defeated Ukraine in a game of 'Russian Roulette' with the scores level at 1:1 the match went to penalties and Croatia got the better winning 3:1 to book their first ever Semi-Final in which they will take on former winners Russia.

Serbia was bundled out of the tournament in the Quarter Finals by Russia in a tight affair losing 2:1. The Serbs got their campaign off with a dramatic

win over Azerbaijan in a classic winning 9:8 but were then defeated by Portugal in a tight one 2:1. Setting up the showdown with the Russians in which Serbia lost by the one goal and thus failing to reach the Semis and a showdown against rivals Croatia.

Serbia

Serbian clubs are well and truly getting into the thick of things in their winter break training camps across the globe, with Red Star, Partizan, Vojvodina and a couple of the other clubs playing competitive friendly matches against clubs from the region.

Avram Grant's Partizan has been very impressive with wins against top Israeli clubs. His professionalism and authority can already be seen at the club. Robert Prosinecki however is not pleased with the effort his lads are putting in and believes there is a lot to go for Red Star to be at a competitive level. The two clubs meet in the Serbian Cup Semi-Finals in what is set to be a crucial doubleheader for both teams and managers especially Robert Prosinecki who is eyeing the Cup as the only silverware the 'Red and Whites' can truly win this season.



The Croatian Futsal team celebrate.

Bosko Jankovic is quickly returning to his best form following a double strike against Lazio in Genoa's 3:2 Serie A win. The winger has been sorely missed by the Serbian national team and will be a quality adjustment to the side as players like Krasic are out of form and on their way out of the national side. Jankovic missed out on the World Cup in South Africa and was absent from Euro 2012 Qualifying both campaigns ended in misery for Serbia and his return could spell a positive turn of results. A FIFPro document suggests Ser-

bian players are easy targets in match fixing with a majority of these players linked to the mafia and betting syndicates. A 'Black Book' has been released of these problems with 3,357 players taking part from Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Russia, Poland, Slovenia, Ukraine, Greece.

Croatia

In an interview for UEFA.com Croatia Manager Slaven Bilic talks about his experience with the National Team as a manager and as a

player and believes it will be hard for his current side to repeat the success of the 1998 generation which finished third at the World Cup in France with Bilic playing a key role in defence. Bilic has been in charge of the Croatia squad since 2006 and has since led the side to 40 wins in 60 matches in which they only lost six times but failed to progress for the World Cup in 2010.

The youngest manager at the upcoming European Championships was also the youngest in 2008 in which he led his side to the Quarter Finals where they lost in a dramatic penalty shoot-out against Turkey.

During the tournament Croatia played fantastic football and didn't lose a match, firstly defeating the hosts Austria 1:0 and then getting a huge scalp against Germany in a 2:1 win and then finished of their group campaign with a 2:0 win over Poland. Croatia has a goal of reaching the Quarter Finals at the upcoming finals and it has the belief it can repeat its success of 2008 but not that of 1998.

Greece

Panathinaikos lead at the top of the Super League has been cut

to two points following the league leaders shock loss to Levadiakos 1:0 with a 83rd minute strike by Melissas. Olympiakos had not trouble getting the points against PAOK in Saloniki with two early goals, the first came in the 5th minute through Abdoun and Mirallas sealed the win in the 18th minute to put the 'Red and Whites' within two points of the top. AEK is now in third following PAOK's slip up and their 1:0 win over Panionios with Kafes getting the only goal.

Turkey

James Troisi continues his rich vein of form scoring another goal for his club Kayserispor but it wasn't enough as his club stumbled to a defeat at home 3:2 to Gencelbirgili.

Galatasaray remains three points a drift over second place Fenerbahce following a come from behind win away to Gaziantepspor, the home side took the lead through Popov but goals to Necati and Elmander gave the league leaders a valuable three points. Fenerbahce was too good for Besiktas winning 2:0 with Yobo and Sow. In Round 26 Galatasaray welcomes Troisi and Kayserispor while Fenerbahce is on the road to Karabukspor

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ENGLAND EPL



	Last5games Most recent first									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
1 Manchester City	24	18	3	3	63	19	+44	57	W L W W W	
2 Manchester United	24	17	4	3	59	24	+35	55	D W W W L	
3 Tottenham Hotspur	24	15	5	4	44	25	+19	50	D W L D W	
4 Chelsea	24	12	7	5	44	29	+15	43	D D D W W	
5 Newcastle United	24	12	6	6	36	31	+5	42	W W L W W	
6 Arsenal	24	12	4	8	46	34	+12	40	W D L L L	
7 Liverpool	24	10	9	5	28	21	+7	39	D W L D L	
8 Sunderland	24	9	6	9	33	24	+9	33	W W W L W	
9 Norwich City	24	8	8	8	34	39	-5	32	W L D W W	
10 Swansea City	24	7	9	8	26	29	-3	30	W D L W W	
11 Everton	24	8	6	10	24	27	-3	30	D W D D L	
12 Stoke City	24	8	6	10	23	36	-13	30	L L D W W	
13 Aston Villa	24	6	10	8	29	33	-4	28	L D W D L	
14 Fulham	24	6	9	9	29	35	-6	27	L D W L W	
15 West Bromwich ...	24	7	5	12	24	34	-10	26	L D W L L	
16 Queens Park Ra...	24	5	6	13	25	41	-16	21	L D W L L	
17 Wolverhampton ...	24	5	6	13	27	44	-17	21	W L D W W	
18 Bolton Wanderers	24	6	2	16	28	49	-21	20	L D W L W	
19 Blackburn Rovers	24	4	6	14	34	54	-20	18	L D W L L	
20 Wigan Athletic	24	3	7	14	21	49	-28	16	D L L L L	

GERMANY Bundesliga



	Last5games Most recent first									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
1 Borussia Dortmund	20	13	4	3	45	14	+31	43	W W W W D	
2 Bayern München	20	13	2	5	47	14	+33	41	D W L W W	
3 Schalke 04	20	13	2	5	46	25	+21	41	D W W W W	
4 Borussia M'gla...	20	12	4	4	31	12	+19	40	D W W W L	
5 Werder Bremen	20	9	5	6	33	34	-1	32	D D D L W	
6 Bayer Leverkusen	20	8	7	5	28	27	+1	31	D D W L D	
7 Hannover 96	20	7	9	4	22	24	-2	30	W W D D D	
8 Hoffenheim	20	6	6	8	22	24	-2	24	D L D D W	
9 Köln	20	7	3	10	29	40	-11	24	W L L L D	
10 Wolfsburg	20	7	3	10	24	36	-12	24	D L W W L	
11 Stuttgart	20	6	5	9	26	28	-2	23	D L L L L	
12 Hamburger SV	20	5	8	7	25	34	-9	23	D W L D D	
13 Mainz 05	20	5	7	8	28	34	-6	22	D W L L D	
14 Nürnberg	20	6	3	11	19	31	-12	21	W L L W L	
15 Hertha BSC	20	4	8	8	25	31	-6	20	L L L D L	
16 Kaiserslautern	20	3	9	8	15	24	-9	18	L D D D D	
17 Augsburg	20	3	8	9	19	33	-14	17	D L D L W	
18 Freiburg	20	4	5	11	25	44	-19	17	D L W L L	

THE CHAMPIONSHIP



	Last5games Most recent first									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
1 West Ham United	29	17	5	7	46	30	+16	56	W L W W W	
2 Southampton	29	15	7	7	51	31	+20	52	D D L W L	
3 Birmingham City	29	14	8	7	47	27	+20	50	W D W W W	
4 Cardiff City	29	13	11	5	46	33	+13	50	L D W D W	
5 Blackpool	29	13	9	7	48	36	+12	48	W W W D W	
6 Middlesbrough	29	12	11	6	33	30	+3	47	D D L L L	
7 Hull City	28	14	4	10	28	25	+3	46	D W W L L	
8 Reading	28	13	6	9	35	27	+8	45	W L W L W	
9 Leeds United	29	13	6	10	47	42	+5	45	W L W D W	
10 Brighton & Hov...	29	13	6	10	32	30	+2	45	W D W W W	
11 Burnley	29	13	5	11	42	34	+8	44	D W D W L	
12 Derby County	28	12	5	11	33	36	-3	41	D L W W W	
13 Leicester City	29	10	9	10	38	33	+5	39	L D W L W	
14 Crystal Palace	29	10	9	10	27	28	-1	39	D D L D L	
15 Barnsley	29	11	6	12	42	46	-4	39	L W L W L	
16 Watford	29	9	9	11	32	40	-8	36	W W L L L	
17 Portsmouth	28	9	7	12	32	30	+2	34	L W L L W	
18 Peterborough U...	29	9	7	13	46	48	-2	34	D L L L D	
19 Ipswich Town	29	10	4	15	46	57	-11	34	W W L D L	
20 Bristol City	29	8	6	15	25	41	-16	30	L L W L W	
21 Millwall	29	7	8	14	28	39	-11	29	L L W L L	
22 Doncaster Rovers	28	6	6	16	23	45	-22	24	D L D W L	
23 Nottingham Forest	28	7	3	18	22	46	-24	24	L L L W L	
24 Coventry City	29	5	7	17	26	41	-15	22	L L W L L	

Greece Super League



	Last5games Most recent first									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
1 Panathinaikos	20	15	3	2	38	16	+22	48	L W W W W	
2 Olympiakos Piraeus	20	14	4	2	44	14	+30	46	W W L W D	
3 AEK Athens	20	11	4	5	27	20	+7	37	W L D D W	
4 PAOK	20	10	5	5	28	17	+11	35	L W W W D	
5 OFI	20	9	5	6	22	16	+6	32	W W W L L	
6 Xanthi	20	8	5	7	24	20	+4	29	L L W D D	
7 Atromitos	19	7	7	5	17	17	+0	28	D L D W W	
8 Aris	20	7	7	6	20	17	+3	28	W W W D D	
9 Asteras Tripolis	20	7	4	9	12	20	-8	25	L W W L W	
10 Ergotelis	20	6	4	10	19	27	-8	22	L D L W L	
11 Panionios	20	6	4	10	17	20	-3	22	L W L W L	
12 Panaitolikos	19	4	6	9	13	22	-9	18	L D L D L	
13 PAS Giannina	18	4	5	9	16	23	-7	17	W W L L L	
14 Levadiakos	17	4	4	9	11	25	-14	16	W W L L L	
15 Kerkyra	18	2	6	10	10	25	-15	12	L L D D L	
16 Doxa Dramas	17	2	3	12	5	24	-19	9	W L L W L	

SPAIN La Liga



	Last5games Most recent first									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
1 Real Madrid	21	18	1	2	71	19	+52	55	W W W W W	
2 Barcelona	21	14	6	1	61	13	+48	48	W D W W D	
3 Valencia	21	10	7	4	31	22	+9	37	D D D L D	
4 Levante	21	9	5	7	27	25	+2	32	D L D L D	
5 Espanyol	21	9	5	7	25	24	+1	32	D W W D D	
6 Athletic Club	21	7	9	5	33	28	+5	30	D W L W D	
7 Atlético Madrid	21	8	6	7	31	27	+4	30	D W W W D	
8 Málaga	21	8	4	9	25	31	-6	28	L W L L D	
9 Osasuna	21	6	10	5	23	33	-10	28	D L D L D	
10 Getafe	21	7	6	8	22	27	-5	27	L W W D D	
11 Sevilla	21	6	8	7	22	24	-2	26	L L D D L	
12 Rayo Vallecano	21	7	4	10	25	32	-7	25	W L L W W	
13 Mallorca	21	6	7	8	18	25	-7	25	W L W L D	
14 Granada	21	7	4	10	16	28	-12	25	W W L L L	
15 Real Sociedad	21	6	6	9	23	30	-7	24	L W L W D	
16 Real Betis	21	7	2	12	23	30	-7	23	L D L W L	
17 Villarreal	21	5	8	8	20	29	-9	23	W D W L D	
18 Racing Santander	21	4	10	7	18	26	-8	22	D D L W W	
19 Sporting Gijón	21	5	4	12	20	39	-19	19	D L L W L	
20 Real Zaragoza	21	2	6	13	16	38	-22	12	L L D D L	

HOLLAND Eredivisie



	Last5games Most recent first									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
1 PSV	20	12	6	2	53	22	+31	42	D W D W W	
2 AZ	20	13	3	4	43	18	+25	42	W L D L W	
3 Twente	19	11	6	2	52	19	+33	39	W W L W W	
4 Heerenveen	20	10	7	3	47	31	+16	37	W W L W W	
5 Feyenoord	20	11	4	5	41	26	+15	37	W W L W D	
6 Ajax	20	9	7	4	49	30	+19	34	L D W W W	
7 Vitesse	20	9	5	6	25	20	+5	32	W L L W D	
8 Groningen	20	8	5	7	32	36	-4	29	L L W W D	
9 Roda JC	20	9	1	10	37	45	-8	28	L W D W L	
10 Heracles	20	6	6	8	32	28	+4	24	D W L L L	
11 RKC Waalwijk	20	7	3	10	24	33	-9	24	W W L W L	
12 NEC	20	7	2	11	20	29	-9	23	L W W W L	
13 NAC Breda	20	6	4	10	25	33	-8	22	L D L W L	
14 ADO Den Haag	20	6	4	10	25	42	-17	22	L L D L W	
15 Utrecht	20	5	6	9	31	38	-7	21	W L D L D	
16 Excelsior	20	3	5	12	15	45	-30	14	W L W L L	
17 De Graafschap	19	3	4	12	17	42	-25	13	D L L L L	
18 VVV	20	3	4	13	19	50	-31	13	L L W L W	

LEAGUE ONE



	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games <i>Most recent first</i>
1 Charlton Athletic	28	19	7	2	53	20	+33	64	DW W W W
2 Sheffield Wedn...	29	17	6	6	53	37	+16	57	W D W D L
3 Huddersfield Town	29	14	13	2	57	29	+28	55	D D W W W
4 Sheffield United	27	16	5	6	52	28	+24	53	L W W L W
5 Milton Keynes Dons	28	13	10	5	53	32	+21	49	D D L D W
6 Stevenage	27	12	9	6	43	25	+18	45	W D W L W
7 Carlisle United	28	12	9	7	43	44	-1	45	W L D W W
8 AFC Bournemouth	29	12	7	10	37	35	+2	43	W L W W D
9 Brentford	28	10	10	8	38	35	+3	40	W L D D L
10 Bury	28	11	5	12	36	45	-9	38	D L W L W
11 Notts County	28	10	7	11	43	40	+3	37	W D D L D
12 Hartlepool United	28	10	7	11	36	36	+0	37	W D W L W
13 Colchester United	27	9	9	9	37	41	-4	36	W L D L W
14 Preston North End	28	10	6	12	41	48	-7	36	D L D W D
15 Leyton Orient	28	9	8	11	30	39	-9	35	L W D L W
16 Oldham Athletic	26	8	8	10	32	37	-5	32	D L D W L
17 Tranmere Rovers	29	8	8	13	30	36	-6	32	L D L D L
18 Yeovil Town	29	6	9	14	33	48	-15	27	L W L W L
19 Exeter City	29	6	9	14	24	42	-18	27	L L D D W
20 Wycombe Wanderers	29	7	5	17	37	55	-18	26	L W L W L
21 Walsall	28	4	13	13	26	34	-8	25	D D L D L
22 Scunthorpe United	27	4	13	10	34	43	-9	25	L D D W D
23 Rochdale	28	5	9	14	27	49	-22	24	W L D L L
24 Chesterfield	29	5	8	16	34	51	-17	23	L W W D L



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